

A LIGHT TO ALL NATIONS?

ASSESSING THE MISSIONAL STRENGTH AND COMMITMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
CHURCHES IN EUROPE

A THESIS-PROJECT

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To Kathy,
my wife, partner and friend,
who has continued to encourage and support my ministry and work
and has literally followed me around the world.
Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis project was to show that international churches, specifically in Europe, but applicable around the world, could be a valuable asset in fulfilling the Great Commission and that they should no longer be seen as “country club” type churches only for expatriates.

This thesis project includes an in-depth study of all the literature dealing with international churches. Also included is a survey that was created and distributed to international church pastors, which deals with the main difficulties and challenges facing international churches.

A secondary finding of this thesis project is that the researcher was able to more fully define what an international church really is and what makes it different from other churches. The researcher also distinguishes the difference between international churches and multicultural / multi-ethnic churches.

In the appendix of this thesis project one will find several listings of international church groups. It is the desire of the researcher that all of the different groups that are involved with international church ministry in Europe will come together at some time in the near future to create one complete database accurately indicating the locations of international churches.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

From France to Congo to France

In December 1990, my wife and I were in Aix-en-Provence, France. We were there to continue our studies of the French language before going to Congo to minister with ReachGlobal the international mission of the Evangelical Free Church of America.¹ We had just finished a one-year program of French studies in Albertville, France. In Aix-en-Provence, we were continuing with a six-month university program of French studies for foreigners at the University of Aix-Marseille, with the goal of earning an internationally accepted French language certificate. In addition, we were auditing a class at the local Evangelical Reformed Seminary.

The demands of our full-time French classes did not leave us with much free time. We managed to spend Sundays attending the local French-speaking “Evangelical Free Church” where we got to know fellow believers. Still, I was focused on leaving France, with all of its attitudes about its language, “the most beautiful language on the earth” because I wanted to get to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The months spent in France studying the language were a mixed bag. It was a mixed bag because France is a very beautiful country, full of wonderful things to see and enjoy, and it has a cuisine that was absolutely marvelous! Yet, at the same time, the

¹ Visit <http://go.efca.org/ministries/reachglobal> for information on ReachGlobal, the international mission of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

French language that so many believed was the “most beautiful language on earth” proved to be an unforgiving language to learn. Mistakes and mispronunciations are guaranteed to occur. For instance, when a foreign student of the French language goes to a Frenchman and asks a simple question like, “Where are the toilets?” they will often be corrected in their pronunciation before they get the answer to their question.

As another example, I came to study French as an experienced pastor and teacher, and I knew how to speak and teach, but when I first tried speaking French, I was treated in a condescending manner, making me feel that the other person did not think I was worth their time or effort. While I admit that this can be good for one’s spiritual humility, it can be a drain on one’s self-image if it continues for an extended period of time.

In December 1990, some friends invited us to attend a “Traditional English Christmas Carol Celebration.” They told us to arrive early because the church would be full. Indeed, that afternoon the church was completely packed with people standing along the back and the sides of the church as we joyfully sang traditional Christmas Carols in English.

In January 1991, we left France and arrived in Congo. During the next few years, I split my time between teaching at a Bible school and teaching English at the local public high school. As a result, I found myself speaking three distinct languages on a daily basis. I spoke Lingala, the trade language in the Ubangi area of Congo, when I was teaching in the Bible School, and I spoke French when I was teaching English in the public high school. Surprisingly, speaking three languages every day (English, Lingala

and French) was not as hard, nor as stressful, as some might think.

During the years that followed, we frequently traveled to Bangui, the capital of the Republic of Central Africa, to assist our mission office. Our responsibilities in Bangui included meeting with political officials to discuss visas, import taxes and shipments. They also included meeting with merchants to purchase supplies for our personnel in Congo. Of course, all of these meetings were conducted in French.

Although the stress of learning the French language was no longer a problem, new situations demanded our time and energy. In the midst of continuing our official responsibilities, we were evacuated because of a political uprising. On two occasions, we had to flee our home due to the invasion of army ants. It was also during this time that we welcomed our two children into our lives.

As months and years went by, we came to the realization that our future was not in Congo, but that it would be somewhere else. So, not having a clear direction as to where our future might be, we asked the mission leadership to find us a new place to minister. They chose France!

In January 1996, we arrived back in Aix-en-Provence, France, where I began ministering as the associate pastor of the French-speaking Evangelical Free Church. French was still a challenge, but it was easier than it had been. I noticed that my attitude had changed during the previous five years as God had placed a true love for the French people in my heart and, along with my wife, we really loved being in France and ministering to the French.

During this time, we became acquainted with the people who ran the annual

“Traditional English Christmas Carol Celebration” in Aix-en-Provence. In 1998, two events occurred that increased my interest in English-speaking ministries in France. First, Dan and Nancy Painter arrived. Dan was a retired US Army Colonel who had spent over ten years as a military attaché in European capital cities. During their assignments, Dan and Nancy were instrumental in opening several international churches. They had come to Aix-en-Provence to develop the “Traditional English Christmas Carol Celebration” into an international church. Shortly after their arrival, the “International Christian Community of Provence” (ICCP) was created.² An invitation by the caroling committee to lead the service marked the second event in 1998. By 1998, the carol service had switched locations to the Catholic Cathedral of Aix-en-Provence to provide more room for those who attended, and over one thousand people came to sing carols that year!

During the summer of 2000, our family moved to Saint Genis Laval, a suburb in the southwest part of Lyon, France, where I became the head pastor of the French-speaking “Evangelical Free Church.” For the next four years, our family ministered in this church, and the church did well, growing spiritually and numerically. In the spring of 2004, I resigned, paving the way for the church to hire their first French pastor.

During the following academic year, I focused on conducting a religious demographic study of the greater Lyon area with the help of a short-term young woman who was helping us for the year. This study showed the tremendous spiritual need that existed (and still exists) in Lyon with less than 0.5% of the total population being

² Visit www.iccpaix.org for more information about the International Christian Community of Provence.

evangelical Christians. One area of the study revealed a need that national French pastors could not meet: reaching the 20,000 English speakers who lived in the Rhone-Alps area.

In order to test this potential project, we decided to host a “Traditional English Christmas Carol Celebration” ourselves to see what would happen. So, with help and guidance from Dan and Nancy, and with a lot of prayer, in December 2005, we hosted our first carol celebration. Approximately 350 people came to sing Christmas carols in English. With this confirmation, the Lyon City Team of ReachGlobal, the international mission of the EFCA, began plans to start the “International Christian Community of Lyon” (ICCL).³

International Ministry Milestones – 2005 to Present

During the next few years, we experienced various milestones in the life of the ICCL. The first milestone was the official creation of the church initiated by filing papers with the French government petitioning the government to legally recognize ICCL as an official French association. As a legally recognized French association, ICCL could join the local evangelical ministerial association, A.P.P.E.L.⁴ In turn, by becoming a member of a known organization, such A.P.P.E.L., ICCL gained credibility with the French government because it demonstrated that ICCL was not just another religious cult from

³ The International Christian Community of Lyon, accessed November 9, 2018 , www.icclyon.org.

⁴ A.P.P.E.L. is the abbreviation for the “Association Pastorale Protestante Evangélique de Lyon” meaning the “Association for the Evangelical Protestant Ministerial of Lyon.”

America, but that we were serious about being held accountable. This was especially important because, in 2004, a main news magazine in France declared that evangelical Christianity was a sect that wanted to conquer the world.⁵ So, anything we could do to show that we were not a sect was a good idea.

Things were going well in Lyon with our worship services, Bible studies, and outreaches. However, we realized that we needed to broaden our base beyond Lyon. It turned out that we were not the only ones with this idea. Dan and Nancy had turned ICCP over to another pastor, and they were thinking about their next ministry steps. After meeting with them for a time of prayer and planning, we decided to create another French association that would seek to unite pastors from international churches in, and beyond, France. The existing concern was that many pastors from international, English-speaking churches in Europe were being left to fend for themselves. There did not seem to be an accountability system for these pastors on a personal level, a ministry level, or a theological level.

Together, we created a new French association known simply as the “International Christian Community – Eurasia.”⁶ It quickly became apparent that ICC-Eurasia could have a big impact on international churches in Europe and even the nearer countries of Asia. We began to gather pastors together for retreats and for prayer and study days. Most came from international churches in France, and a few came from the nearby countries of Italy, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic.

⁵ Slimane Zeghidour and Sophie de Déserts, “Les évangéliques: La secte qui veut conquérir le monde,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 26 février 2004.

⁶ The International Christian Community of Eurasia, www.icceurasia.com.

As churches and pastors began to affiliate with ICC-Eurasia, several pastors involved with national French-speaking churches questioned the need for such an organization. Many of these pastors could not see the validity of international, evangelical, English-speaking churches when there were plenty of international (in their opinion) evangelical, French-speaking churches. This was a valid argument, if only the French language was removed from the equation. Our experience, and the experiences of other pastors from international, English-speaking churches, confirmed that there was a genuine need for English-speaking, international, evangelical churches throughout all of Europe.

As ICC-Eurasia continued to develop, it became apparent that the organization needed to have official recognition. We decided that we would pursue membership with the newly created national evangelical association known as the “Conseil National des Evangéliques de France” (C.N.E.F.).⁷ During December 2015 ICC-Eurasia became a member of C.N.E.F.

Why English for European Churches?

The argument that we faced in trying to convince some local pastors of the need for English-speaking international churches in a non-English speaking European country deserves further explanation. A large part of our position deals with what is known today as “globalization.” There are many competing ideas about the definition of globalization, and many people tend to have negative feelings toward it. However, the

⁷ For more information on the C.N.E.F. go to www.lecnef.org.

reality is that little can be done to stop the overall spread of globalization, therefore it is best to see how one can benefit from it.

At this point, some of definitions of globalization can shed light on this subject and help bring understanding as to how globalization affects Christian ministry around the world:

Globalization refers to a multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant.⁸

Globalization is a complex process of expanding cross-border relationships and flows, and two particular features will accelerate migration in the future: the progressive reduction of barriers to global economic flows and growing transnationalism (where people's interactions and identities are less contained by national boundaries)... Globalization is rooted in social and economic relationships that have been building in complexity for centuries, and it has been supported by the more recent creation of international organizations.⁹

These definitions emphasize that there have been great changes in our society that have been driven by the world economy. The world has become much smaller. So, it helps to see the world as more of a "global village" than as independent countries. We cannot ignore the rest of the world, which is the rest of our village. Globalization is the driving force behind the great changes in world immigration. People are easily traveling to where their work takes them, even when it is halfway around the world. Global companies already exist around the world, many of them with branch offices in several countries. This pattern continues to expand.

⁸ Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2003) 13.

⁹ Ian Goldin, Geoffrey Cameron and Meera Balarajan, *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2011), 215.

Globalization means that immigration has become the norm, and this is evident in Europe. One recent publication states, “Immigration has become the ‘new normal’ for all countries in Western Europe. Increased immigration rates have put strains on numerous sectors of society, including employment, schooling, and housing.”¹⁰

Along with immigration comes the challenge of communication. How are people able to communicate when a large percentage of them come from countries with a language different than their new host country? The answer to this question in the past would have been, “Let them learn the new language!” Yet, with so many people moving around the world, and with the fact that many countries have come to realize their own language is not as big, nor as important as they thought, they have adopted a “global language.” This “global language” is English.¹¹

A leading expert on English and its worldwide influence is David Crystal. His book, “English As a Global Language” provides an abundance of proof as to why English is so important in today’s world. He states, “The present-day world status of English is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United

¹⁰ Todd M. Johnson, “Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020: Society, Religion and Mission” (South Hamilton, MA: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2013), 53.

¹¹ Google. Worldwide Web. “Experts on significance of English language as lingua franca,” <https://www.google.com> (accessed September 5, 2018). The phenomena of the growth of the English language as the world’s lingua franca is readily available to anyone who does a simple “Google search” on “English language as lingua franca.” One finds that there are over 1.4 million articles available online dealing with this subject. On the first page from the Google search, one finds that nine of the ten articles are from and written for academic research.

States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century.”¹² Crystal adds to this declaration by saying, “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.”¹³ He proceeds to defend this statement with a variety of proofs given which show its validity. He shares that English now has a special status in over 70 countries and that it is now the world’s most widely taught foreign language, being taught in over 100 different countries.¹⁴

But David Crystal is not alone in stating the importance of English. In the book, *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, Joel Carpenter contributed a chapter called, “New Evangelical Universities: Cogs in a World System or Players in a New Game?” In this chapter are several pertinent thoughts on the importance of the English language. Carpenter writes, “English is rapidly becoming the universal language of high-level scientific and technological study, thus diminishing the use and influence of indigenous languages.”¹⁵ Later, he writes, “Beyond the Internet per se, English has become this age's lingua franca in both the academy and the business world.”¹⁶ While Carpenter may not be the world’s leading expert on the English language as the world’s lingua franca, his statements are collaborating evidence to the researcher’s position on the importance of the English language.

¹² David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Kindle 1091-1093.

¹³ Crystal, *English*, 244.

¹⁴ Crystal, *English*, 263.

¹⁵ Joel Carpenter, “New Evangelical Universities: Cogs in a World System or Players in a New Game,” in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities* edited by Ogbu U. Kalu;Alaine M. Low (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 172.

¹⁶ Carpenter, “New Evangelical,” 179.

This means that we use English because English is being used all around us. One does not have to live in France for long before realizing more and more people who live in France do not speak French. This same observation is valid for any country in Europe in regard to its own language, especially since the creation of the European Union and the Euro Zone.

Another valid argument in favor of an English-speaking church in Europe is that it can help people grow in their faith. If English is a person's maternal language, it makes sense that he or she will be able to worship more deeply in English. Now, for many of the Europeans living in France, English is not their mother language, but it is their second language. Many of the immigrants who have settled in France speak several languages, and French is not their main foreign language. As a result, not having a church that worships in their mother tongue, they prefer to worship in English because they understand English better than French.

Again, my own experiences while learning French are important to remember. Even though I persevered, and I am able to carry on a fluent conversation, the process of getting to that point was not easy. Many expatriates who are sent to France for their employment, usually for no more than three to five years, do not speak French well or at all. They are in France because of their employment, not because they have chosen to live where they can speak the language. A large part of these expatriates will have company perks that include studying the language for up to one hundred hours of classroom time. While this is important, it will not be enough for them to be fluent. Therefore, an English-speaking, international church will be what they are looking for in

terms of a church.

So, we use English partly because of its prominence in the world. Yet, the main reason is because English best meets the communication needs of the many different foreign people who come into a country for a limited amount of time. At the same time, it is important to not belittle the local language. If one is living in a foreign country for a consequent length of time, it is extremely beneficial to learn the language.

Simply stated, the bottom line is, “How can they hear if they don’t understand?” And that answer is through the use of the English language.

Purpose of This Thesis-Project

The goal of this project is to demonstrate how an English-speaking, international church can be a great tool to help reach both the expatriates in European countries and the nationals of these countries. In addition, it will demonstrate how these international churches can help local churches. Once this project is completed, its content will be made available to other mission groups working in Europe.

Working with English-speaking, international churches is not the only way to engage church planting in Europe. It should be obvious that the indigenous European languages ought to be used in most European church planting. Still, it is important to consider how English-speaking international churches can help the overall European ministry as a useful tool given the prominence of English speakers in Europe.

An indirect goal is to provide the means for an accountability group designed for pastors of English-speaking, international, European-based churches. This will be

accomplished by communicating the existence of ICC-Eurasia and by attendance at the annual conferences hosted for pastors and their families. This will provide opportunities for pastors of these churches to gather for various study and prayer days.

In many ways, one could say that ICC-Eurasia is in the formation stages of a new denomination, or federation, of international, English-speaking churches in Europe. While this is not a goal of the board of ICC-Eurasia, one does not know what the results will be. Yet, for pastors who are working in English-speaking, international, evangelical, European-based churches, and who are not part of a church denomination, being a member of ICC-Eurasia can provide a similar accountability structure to that normally provided by denominations.

Importance of This Thesis-Project

Every day, there are more and more people moving around the globe. Many are moving because of employment needs. Others move because they want a better life, they want freedom from political tyranny, or they want to be closer to family. Whatever the reason may be, a growing percentage of the global population is made up of immigrants, meaning everyone from refugees to international students to expatriate workers. They may or may not have things in common with their new neighbors. They may or may not even be able to communicate well with those around them.¹⁷

Because of the importance of the English language around the world today, English has become an essential tool for those who are involved in any type of ministry

¹⁷ Goldin, *Exceptional People*, 215.

to any of these immigrants. For immigrants in Europe who speak English, either as their mother tongue, or as a second or third language, they may be interested in an international, English-speaking, evangelical church that is there to help them with their adjustment and to help them in their spiritual journey.

To show the main importance of this thesis project, one needs to answer the question, "How can they hear if they don't understand?"

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.¹⁸

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide background as to why I believe international, English-speaking, evangelical churches are so important to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Migration is increasing, with no signs of change, because of global economic reasons and the process of globalization that is occurring. Our world is becoming an increasingly smaller place, and we must do all that we can to share the Good News found in the Holy Bible, the message of salvation. Doing all we can means using every means possible. One of those means includes the international, English-speaking, churches because they can reach a larger percentage of the world's

¹⁸ Romans 10:14-17. Unless otherwise stated, all reference quoted will be from the New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

population than any one non-English-speaking church, even if these churches have many international people in attendance due to having many cultures integrated into their services. Putting this in another light, there are more people who speak and understand English in the whole world than any other language.

You will find a typical thesis-project layout in the following chapters. Chapter two presents theological foundations for the international, English-speaking, evangelical church. The actual application of this chapter can in fact be much broader, because the theological arguments discuss why believers should be involved in any type of church-planting work.

Chapter three is a literature review of works that have been published on the ministry of international, English-speaking, churches. There has not been much that has been published, but the interest is beginning to rise as seen by the increasing number of published articles.

Chapter four outlines the basic plan as to how the research on this thesis-project was conducted. This includes discussions on the methods of research and explanations for the chosen specific methodology which was mainly through online surveys, followed by informal, Skype based interviews.

Chapter five concludes the thesis by explaining the results of the research. Included in this chapter are the difficulties faced by the researcher and why the research took longer than planned. Each question 's responses are evaluated, some by simple comparison, some by cross-referencing answers from other questions. Several charts are given to help in understanding specific results. At the end of the chapter, the

researcher gives a summary of the results, emphasizing those results that stood out as being significant.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a difference between an airplane and every other form of transportation. All other forms of transportation can stop and even back up in the middle of their trip. But if an airplane stops, or even slows down too much, it will be forced into a landing, and maybe not a pleasant landing. An airplane needs forward thrust to keep it going.

In the same way, the only safe direction for a Christian to move is to keep going forward. When he slows, stops, or especially if he backs up, he is in grave danger. Jesus said in Luke 9:62 that, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

To keep going forward, a Christian must know the commands and wishes of God. He must be fueled by biblical teachings and keep feeding himself from the Bible. This is comparable to flying forward in an airplane if he does not wish to become stagnant, which would result in a crash landing. There are many topics in the Bible to study, but one main area of teaching deals with missions and the proclamation of the Gospel. It is this author’s opinion that if more Christians properly understood what the Bible teaches in this area that they would be more involved in fulfilling Christ’s mission.

This chapter explores a total of six biblical principles, five of which are biblical

motives for missions and the proclamation of the Gospel.¹ The sixth principle presents a theological and biblical framework for why Christians should be involved in international church work in Europe, or at least in multi-cultural church work wherever they may be living.²

God's Glory

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

-Philippians 2:9-11

When we read that every knee is to bow and every tongue is to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that this brings glory to God the Father, we have to be saddened and concerned. We are saddened and concerned because we know that not every knee has bowed and not every tongue has acknowledged that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In fact, if we look at the world's population, we see just how far we really are from "every" knee bowing and "every" tongue confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.

According to the *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910 - 2010*, in 2010, the largest religion in the world was Christianity, which was about 33.2% of the world's population.³ Other religions are listed as follows:

¹ These five Biblical principles were shared verbally with the researcher by Dr. Benjamin Sawatsky in 1988 during candidate school when the researcher and his wife were joining ReachGlobal, the international mission of the Evangelical Free Church of America. Dr. Sawatsky gave the point titles along with Biblical references, the material under each point is from the researcher's personal study.

² This sixth principle is the result of the researcher's own study and reading.

³ Todd M. Johnson, Kenneth R. Ross, and Sandra S.K. Lee, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2009), 6.

Christian	33.2%	Buddhist	6.8%	Sikhs	0.4%
Muslim	22.4%	Chinese Folk	6.6%	Jews	0.2%
Hindu	13.7%	All Others	8%	Baha'is	0.1%
Agnostic	9.3%	Atheists	2%		

Can we honestly say that God is glorified when two out of three people on this earth do not believe Jesus Christ is Lord? Yes, Christianity is the largest of all the religions, but that does not change the basic fact that two thirds of this world's population does not bend the knee to Jesus. Is God glorified in that? Yes, the 33.2% of the world's population can glorify God, but we know that remaining people are not glorifying God, meaning that there is still much work to do in evangelizing the world.

One may think that it is still not too bad that Christianity is at 33.2% of the world's population, making it the number one world religion. However, let's take a look at the progress that has been made over the last hundred years. In 1910, the largest religion in the world was Christianity, and it has been calculated that Christianity was at 34.8% of the world's population at that time. Yes, as far as percentages go, the proportion of Christians in this world has dropped by 1.6 percent in the overall percentages of world religions. This is not a good sign for Christianity. The *Atlas* does say that the actual number of Christians increased from 612 million to 2.29 billion during the last hundred years. So, there was an increase in the actual number of believers, but the overall population of the world continued to grow as well, and the result is that the percentage of Christians has slightly diminished during the last hundred years.

At the same time, it is important to note that some other religions have changed

tremendously during the last hundred years. The largest change is what has happened with the Muslim faith. Muslims have gone from 12.6 percent of the world's population in 1910 to 22.4 percent today. This means that they have, for all practical purposes, doubled in proportion during the last hundred years. In 1910, they totaled 220 million and today they number 1.55 billion. Muslims have grown in every area of the world, except for Latin America where the Muslim faith is still under 1 percent of the total population.

Another major change during the last century, is the increase of those who are Agnostics. "Agnosticism is the philosophical or religious view that the truth value of certain claims — particularly claims regarding the existence of God, gods, deities, ultimate reality or afterlife — is unknown or, depending on the form of agnosticism, inherently unknowable due to the subjective nature of experience."⁴ One hundred years ago, agnosticism did not even figure on the calculable list of world religions, but in 2010 agnostics account for 9.3 percent of the world's population. Europe, Asia, and North America have all been influenced by a large growth in Agnosticism.

⁴ "Agnosticism," *New World Encyclopedia*, accessed July 2, 2013, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Agnosticism&oldid=963508>.

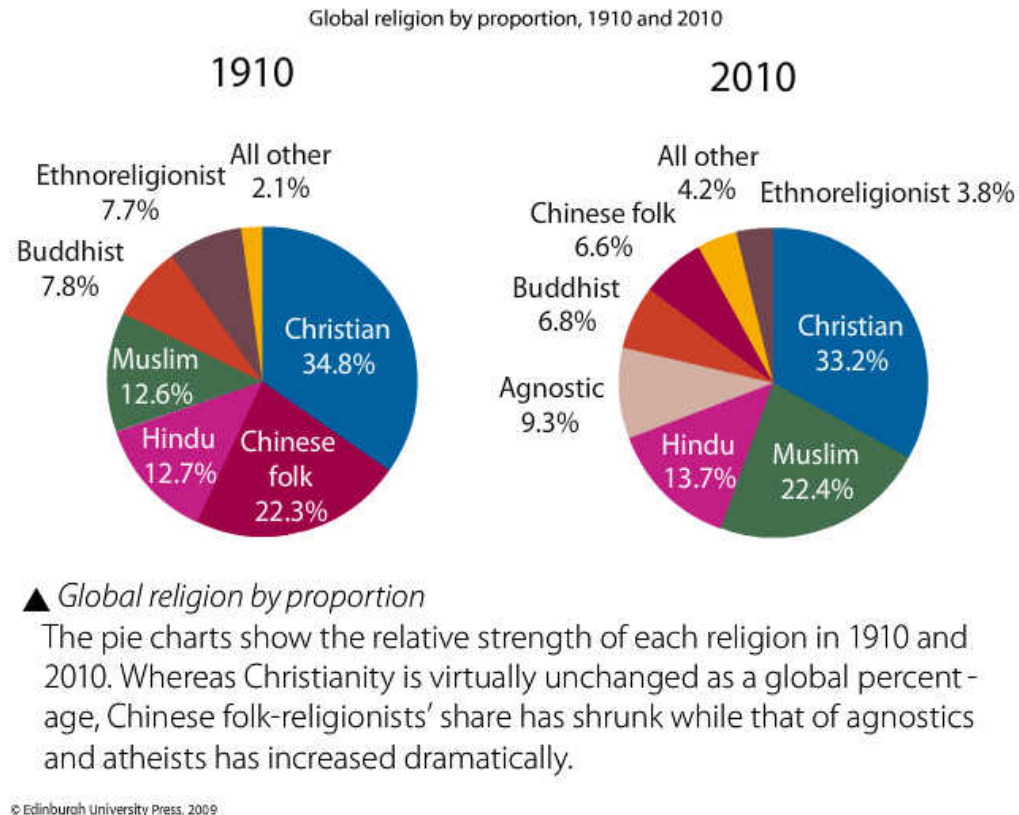


Figure 1. Global Religion by Proportion. Source: Johnson, et. al., *Atlas*, 6.

Another area for study explores how these numbers relate to specific global regions. The *Atlas* points out that the percentage of Christians in Europe and North America has diminished during the last hundred years. However, given that the overall percentage of Christianity has changed little, it may be observed that Christianity has grown in other places. This is true for Africa, which has seen a 38 percent increase in its Christian population. Asia's Christian population has also grown during the last century with a 6 percent increase.⁵

⁵ Johnson, et al, *Atlas*, 7.

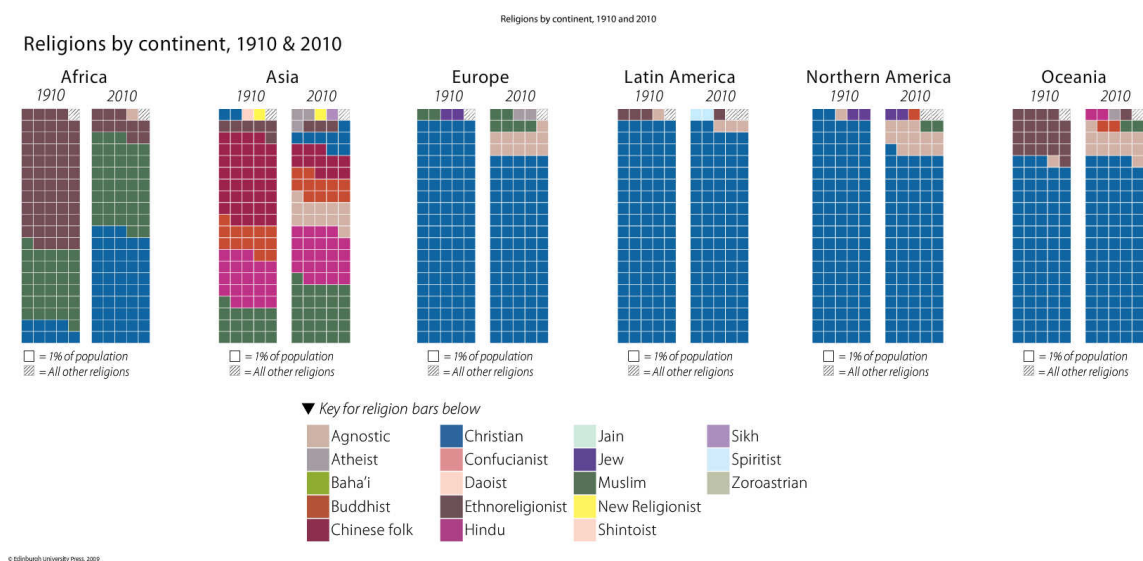


Figure 2. Religions by Continent, 1910 and 2010. Source: Johnson et al, *Atlas*, 7.

Does it bring glory to God that decreasing numbers of people in Europe and North America are bowing the knee and acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord? Does it bring glory to God that increasing numbers of people consider Agnosticism as a valid alternative to Christianity? Does it bring glory to God that only 8 percent of the total population in Asia, the most populous continent, is Christian?

Being concerned for God's glory should move us to become increasingly involved in missions and in the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel of Christ. The Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) has a definition for an unreached country that would make most of the European countries unreached. The IMB states, "An unreached people group is one in which less than 2% of the population are evangelical Christians."⁶ Whether we wish to take the stand that only evangelical

⁶ Jervis David Payne, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration, and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 55.

Christians are true believers, or if we can believe that true Christians can be found in any major Christian religion, this should not change the fact that when people don't bow before Jesus and they don't proclaim Him as Lord and Savior, this does not bring glory to God. Our theology for reaching Europe needs to keep in mind the glory of God, and God's glory should spur us on to more evangelistic work in Europe.

Christ's Love and Compassion

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

-2 Corinthians 4:14

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

-Matthew 9:35-38

Our love for a certain people's group will never be enough. Even our love for Christ will not be enough. We must come to the point where we have the love OF Christ in us for others. Then we can experience what Christ's compassion is really like. But how can one know if they have the love OF Christ in them?

The passage in Matthew says that Jesus had compassion on these people. He saw people who were being harassed, or you could say that they were being tormented. They were helpless against this harassment, this tormenting, like sheep are helpless against wolves. Jesus rightly compared them to being like sheep without a shepherd. The verb "to have compassion" (*splanchnizomai*) suggests strong emotion, a feeling of

deep sympathy, or affection or inward feelings for the object.⁷ To put it another way, to have compassion for someone means that you have this feeling in your gut, which has been tied up in knots because you so strongly care about their situation.

In this passage, Jesus says that the people did not have a shepherd. The shepherd was to take care of the flock, and in this case, this is an image of what the Jewish nation had become. The Jewish religious leaders were supposed to be the shepherds of the people, leading them in their spiritual lives. Yet, instead of wanting to do good things for their people, as a shepherd should, the religious leaders were doing what they could to keep the Jewish people from believing in Jesus as Christ, the Messiah. On the other hand, Jesus saw the people and had compassion on them because they were being harassed, they were helpless, and they were being led down a road that leads to hell.

A short illustration might help us understand the concept of how we should apply compassion: There once was a very sick little Indian girl, and the only way that the doctor could save her was through a blood transfusion. Unfortunately, the hospital didn't have her blood type. So, the doctor went to the girl's family and asked her brother if he would be willing to give his blood for his sister. The doctor already knew that this boy really loved his little sister, and he hoped that this boy would be willing to help. The young boy was scared, but he agreed and went with the doctor back to the hospital. Almost immediately after receiving the transfusion from her brother, the little

⁷ Louis A. Barbieri Jr. "Matthew" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, vol 2, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 41.

girl began to look better. The girl's brother was happy, but he began to cry and cry. When the doctor asked him what was wrong, the boy responded that he was very happy that he could save his sister's life, but he wanted to know how much time he had left before he was going to die. When this young boy had agreed to give blood to his sister, he thought that he would actually be giving his life for hers, and he was willing to do that. He had compassion for his sister that was a willingness to give his life for hers.

There is another very important aspect of these verses that deals with a solution to those who don't have a shepherd, to those who are being harassed and are helpless. Jesus says there is much work to do, but that there is a lack of workers to help with the harvest. So, He states that we must "ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field". Jesus says that more workers are needed.

When we look at the people around us, do we have compassion on them? Do we see them as sheep without a shepherd? Do we see them as being lost and going to hell? Do we have the love OF Christ in us that gives us His compassion? Are we willing to be some of these workers who can help with the spiritual harvest? Our theology must have compassion.

Christ's Command

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
-Matthew 28:18-20.

A soldier in the military quickly learns that it is imperative to obey the

commanding officers. If he does not obey, the probable consequence is some type of punishment! Obedience is expected, and disobedience is not tolerated.

In these verses, commonly called the “Great Commission”, Jesus states he has all authority in heaven and on earth. This means that he is to be our supreme commander. So, why is it that the commands in these verses are not obeyed by more believers? I think it might be because many people do not really understand what the command is about!

In this passage, even though we may think that there are four commands given, there is really only one. This passage has one imperative, one command and one central thought. The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* states, “Jesus’ commission, applicable to all His followers, involved one command, ‘Make disciples,’ which is accompanied by three participles in the Greek: ‘going,’ ‘baptizing,’ and ‘teaching.’”⁸

The only verb in this command is “make disciples” (*mathēteusate*). As a verb in the imperative tense it carries the weight of a command. Jesus commanded his disciples to engage in evangelism in its fullest sense. This was not simply being involved in evangelistic crusades, but actually taking people and making them into complete disciples of Christ. Yet, there are other parts of this command that are important. The three participles used help us understand the full meaning of making disciples. These participles are “going, baptizing, and teaching.” This means that the idea is that, while we are “going,” we should be making disciples of those around us. We do this by baptizing them and by teaching these disciples all that we can about Jesus.

⁸ Barbieri, “Matthew,” 94.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, the Apostle Paul told Timothy what making disciples meant: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” Here, the idea is that we are all supposed to be involved in discipling someone, and this echoes the imperative in Matthew 28:19. We do this so that those we disciple can turn around and disciple someone else who can also disciple someone else. By following this pattern we can see that a new spiritual generation is born from its preceding spiritual generation and this pattern is to continue.

The fact that this verse starts by saying, “Go,” or if you want to use the active participle tense, “while you are going,” shows the importance of actually going. The popular saying, “All can pray, some can give, but only a few can go,” is really false. We are all supposed to be involved in going. This does not necessarily mean that one must leave one’s homeland, but that we need to have some type of outreach beyond our homes. We must be involved.

Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This verse points out that we need to have people involved in disciple making while reaching these four areas of our own lives. Where is our Jerusalem? It is our hometown, or where we are currently living. Where is our Judea? It is our country. Our Samaria refers to our surrounding countries. The ends of the earth mean just that – the farthest places of this earth. There is no place where we are not to be making disciples.

Are we obeying Christ's command? Are we actively making disciples? Our theology must involve obedience to Christ.

Christ's Return

"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

-Acts 1:11

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

-John 14:2-3

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

-Revelation 22:20

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

-Matthew 24:40-44

After the world wars and the rebirth of the nation of Israel, there appeared to be high expectations that the return of Christ was going to happen soon. Certain theologians developed dispensational timelines, and many went around giving seminars on the end times, including in the researcher's home church. This grew into a real expectancy that Jesus was coming back soon, after all, Jesus said He is coming back to this world and that He is coming soon. We should be looking forward to His coming because then we will be with Him forever.

Yet, there are some issues with Christ's return that need mentioning. First, we do

not know when this return will actually occur. If we knew the timing of his return, we could plan and be ready. We may not know when Christ is returning, but we do know that he will. These verses instruct us to be involved in Christ's work so that when he does return we are ready.

Second, we need to remember that his return will affect all people, not just those who have bowed the knee and who proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord. Can you imagine what it will be like for those who are left behind? Other biblical texts state that those who believe in Jesus Christ will be rewarded according to what they have been doing, but that those who don't believe will be punished. Matthew 25:46 states that some will go "to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." The notion of an eternal time frame for our future existence should be enough to motivate us to involvement in Christ's earthly work.

Are we certain of Christ's return? Does this affect our involvement in all the areas of our lives? The certainty of Christ's return must influence our theology.

The Situation of the Condemned

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

-John 3:18

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

-John 3:36

Have you ever been moved emotionally by the plight of individuals on death row? We have a DVD in our home called, "Dead Man Walking" about an inmate who is

on death row and waiting for his execution.⁹ This movie makes you think and ties your emotions into knots. The people on death row have no hope. They are waiting to be put to death. This fifth principle is not supposed to be an argument either for or against capital punishment, but I bring it up because it introduces the spiritual condition of those who don't believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Does their eternal future grip your heart? Are you burdened about the spiritually lost? Do you cry over their fate?

Like our preceding point, "Christ's Return," there used to be a number of sermons preached every year about hell. However, with the great emphasis on tolerance today, it appears that hell is not a very popular subject these days. This does not change the simple fact that hell does exist. In today's society, we are careful to be accepting of people's different life styles and choices, and that is good, taken by itself. However, we must not forget that the reality is that hell exists, and many people are going there, even if we, or they, don't want to hear about it.

There are only two possible places where we are told that we will spend eternity. These two places are heaven or hell. The human tendency is to consider these two places from just our human perspective of good and evil with a big balance for weighing our deeds. The thought is that if we do more good things than bad things, we will go to heaven. The converse is also considered true, if you do more bad things than good things, you will end up in hell. But, this is not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible makes it clear that being a good person is important, but it is not

⁹ *Dead Man Walking*. Tim Robbins director. Gramercy Pictures. 1995. Film. Based on book *Dead Man Walking* by Sister Helen Prejean C.S.J., Random House Inc., 1993.

enough in itself to merit going to heaven. Even things like having a good job, or having nice and obedient children, or having wonderful manners, or having an education from one of the greatest schools in the world, or having a great amount of wealth, or even being religious are not enough for people to get out of hell and get into heaven. 1

Corinthians 3:11-14 states:

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

If we do not base our lives upon Jesus Christ, then what we are doing is not going to stand the ultimate test. Anything without Jesus Christ is going to be burned up. Our good and respectable jobs, our wonderful manners, our higher education; all of these are considered as straw, and straw burns when it is put in a fire.

I have often heard the argument that Christianity's belief in Jesus as the way to heaven is only one way among many to get to heaven. A rabbi during a talk he gave to a protestant ministerial meeting stated that he believed that we are all climbing up the same mountain, but we are just climbing from different sides and when we get to the top we will see each other.¹⁰ This is a dangerous idea, and it is exactly what Universalists would like us to believe, but it not what the Bible teaches. We are not all climbing the same mountain, and when we get to the top we will not see each other!

Jesus referred to Hell quite a bit in the Gospel records. In fact, Randy Alcorn, in

¹⁰ Comment given by a rabbi in Lyon, France during a talk he was giving to the protestant ministerial meeting at which the researcher was in attendance.

his book, “Heaven,” states that “Jesus talks more about Hell than anyone else (Matthew 10:28; 13:40-42; Mark 9:43-44). He refers to it as a real place and describes it in graphic terms—including raging fires and the worm that doesn’t die. Christ says the unsaved “will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12).”¹¹

Jesus spoke about this in John 14:6 when he said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” The Apostle Peter in Acts 4:12 continues this view as he defends his faith in Jesus before the Jewish high priest when he says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

There is only one way to heaven, and that is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. God does not choose to send people to hell. He sent His Son to die for the sins of everyone on earth, and it is the responsibility of each person to believe in Him and to accept this free gift. By refusing to accept this gift, one condemns himself, thereby choosing to go to hell.

This is a sobering subject. To make things more sobering, we are all going to die. No one is going to escape. The percentage of people on this earth that will die, given enough time, is 100 percent. If we really believe that there are only two choices after our human existence is over, does our life really show this priority? In Hebrews 9:27, we read that, “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

¹¹ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven: Biblical Answers to Common Questions* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004) Kindle 390-393.

Being on death row, waiting for your execution is terrible. Dying without a faith in Jesus Christ as Lord is much, much worse. It means eternity in hell, a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth,”¹² “where the fire never goes out,”¹³ where one is “in torment.”¹⁴

These facts should make us greatly concerned about the situation of those who are condemned. We should be doing all we can to tell people about the gift of God’s grace given through His Son Jesus Christ, so that as many as possible will be able to spend eternity in heaven, in the presence of Jesus Christ. Our theology must include the reality of hell.

Christ’s Prayer for Unity and the Prophecy of a True Multicultural Church

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

-John 17:20-23

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

-Ephesians 3:3-6

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their

¹² Matthew 8:21.

¹³ Mark 9:43.

¹⁴ Luke 16:23.

hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

“Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”

-Revelation 7:9-12

For many years, churches around the world have gone about their church work and church planting methods according to what has become known as the “homogeneous unit principle.” The homogeneous unit principle, or HUP, “suggests that churches grow fastest when they’re homogeneous — made up of people from the same ethnic, economic, and educational background.”¹⁵ This principle has actually had great success, as many HUP churches have been planted and have grown into adult churches. In fact, the majority of churches around the United States, and perhaps the world, fit into the homogeneous category. For example, in 1998, a national study of American congregations found that just 5 percent of Protestant churches were racially diverse (no one racial group is 80 percent or more of the congregation).¹⁶ People who come from the same ethnic, economic and educational background are much more likely to get

¹⁵ Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li, *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), Kindle 171-172.

¹⁶ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 93-95.

along with each other. So, we might feel that this is a better way for us to be unified.

Ephesians 3:3-6 could be a possible application of this method. We preach, and we hope that we show, that there is only one Head of the church, Jesus Christ. Yet, that does not seem to make sense when one looks at this entire passage. How can we say that we are one body, when the Christian world, specifically the evangelical world, seems to be more divided than ever? Todd Johnson and Cindy Wu show this reality in their book, *Our Global Families*: “Within our global Christian family, difference has resulted in a very fragmented church. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity counts 45,000 denominations within Christianity today.”¹⁷ We cannot say that we are united as one when there are over 45,000 denominations! Being united as one should also mean that there is one church. The reality is that so many things are dividing us and keeping us from fellowshiping with other believers. As Christians, we need to look further into the meaning and application of these verses.

Still, the passage that I would like us to really pull some applications from is the last passage mentioned above, Revelation 7:9-12. In this passage, we see clearly a group of people worshipping the Lord, and this group is definitely multicultural. It says that they come from “every nation, tribe, people and language.” If this is what it is going to be like in heaven, why can we not try to be like that here on earth? Why are our churches not representing every nation, every tribe, every people and every language? The reason, as I believe it to be, is that we simply haven’t seen the

¹⁷ Todd M. Johnson and Cindy M. Wu, *Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity in a Changing World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015) Kindle 56.

importance of having all of these represented in one single church. Some could argue that we do have Christian churches in every nation, in every tribe, in every people group, and in every language. But, that is missing the implication that this is supposed to be represented in one, single, united church. An international church is where one can experience what this passage is speaking about!

Conclusion

These first five biblical truths show the importance of a good biblical and theological framework for a persevering involvement with the European church work. Why should we be concerned about God's glory? Why should Christ's love and compassion move us? Why is Christ's command, the Great Commission, so important? What does Christ's return have to do with us being involved in European evangelism? Does the situation of the condemned, those who are going to hell because they haven't trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord, cause us to increase our involvement with the Gospel?

All of these truths should cause our love for God to increase. Why? Because these truths show us how much God really loved us. The love that we have been shown by God, and the grace that has been bestowed upon us, should compel us to do whatever we can so that others too may share in our blessings.

John 3:16-17 states, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." Having a good theology of Biblical teachings should compel us to show our love more

and more for God. Having a complete theology of why we should be involved in church work will enable us to continue being involved and to continue showing God's love, even during difficult situations.

If we are following the first five biblical truths, why can't we also follow the sixth truth? We should also be united into one body, truly showing that Christ is the sole head of our church. Our churches should have the goal of being a true representation of what heaven is going to be like, with believers from every nation, tribe, people and language represented in our membership. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are few places on earth where every nation and tribe and people and language are really represented. However, we also know that with today's globalization, there are increasing numbers of people moving around the world so that in almost every major city of the world, one can find a mix of cultures. So, would it be possible to say that every church should have as its goal to have their membership be representative of their local cultural and ethnographic demography?

This is what we want to see in international churches. There should be a true willingness to welcome all people from every corner of the world. It should not matter from what nation or tribe or people or language they come. We, as believers, should be unified in our faith, putting others' ecclesiastical needs before our own, being willing to sacrifice our desires for the good of the whole group. No one cultural group should determine how a church should be run, but the majority group should be serving the minority groups.

Are we willing to continue moving forward in our Christianity even if that means changing our cultural understanding and expectations of what we feel a church should be? Is the plane mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, as applied to our spiritual life, moving forward and flying well, or is it in danger of crashing because we are not willing to change our biblical and theological understanding?

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of available literature dealing with International Churches. It is divided into three sections which address international and expatriate issues: books, various dissertations, and magazine articles. Most of the literature specifically addresses international churches, while this is a minor contribution in a few. The books appear in order of their importance to the international church work scene, per my opinion. The dissertations and articles appear in alphabetical order by author.

Books

The International Pastor Experience: Testimonies from the Field

David Packer, editor of *The International Pastor Experience*, is the senior pastor of International Baptist Church in Stuttgart, Germany. This text is a compilation of writings by Packer and seventeen other international pastors or heads of international missions.¹ While it may be one of the best resources on international church ministry, it seems unfortunate that it was not published by a regular publisher for wider distribution. Rather, it was self-published with the help of the CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, which is not actually found in the book, but on the Amazon web

¹ David Packer, ed., *The International Pastor Experience* (Lexington, KY: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), i.

site.²

In the ten chapters of this book, Packer puts together a collection of both positive and negative possibilities of international church work. For example, in the first chapter, Jimmy Martin, General Secretary of the International Baptist Convention, presents several strong arguments for a positive future for international churches. Providing several reasons, he states international churches will be better able to reach and evangelize the future global nomads. One such reason, Martin explains, is the simple use of English as the *lingua franca* of the world.³ He adds that the international church has “the potential for significant evangelistic effectiveness” as there are groups of refugees, students, diplomatic corps members, and business people living overseas who are more open to the Gospel message.⁴

Martin not only deals with positive aspects of international church ministry, but he also points out challenges more probable in the international church. He points out that Paul’s advice given to the church in Ephesus to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” is needed advice because the international church has the same struggles as a regular church in protecting their unity, and they have new struggles such as “tribal differences among members from the same country and polygamous marriages in the church.”⁵ Without any doubt, there are many others.

² Packer, *International Pastor Experience*.

³ Jimmy Martin, “The Future of International Churches,” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 7.

⁴ Martin, “Future,” 7.

⁵ Martin, “Future,” 7.

Later, Martin states the mission, vision, and core values of the international church must be broader than those of a normal church. He writes, “International churches and their leaders must be convinced of the necessity of taking the Gospel to the whole world and of ‘making disciples of all nations.’ The international church is not called to be merely a ‘home away from home’ for expatriates but a global worshiping, ministering, witnessing, discipling, and sending body for people.”⁶ This last point should be emphasized because the international church can most definitely be a “sending body for people.” Personal experience has revealed this is a valid and important characteristic of international churches. Many attend an international church for only three to five years because governments, businesses, or schools send people to a location for this brief time. For this reason, it is vitally important for the international church to present itself as a sending church. In the experience of the researcher, every summer saw between a fourth and a half of our people leaving, and it was much nicer to see them go as being sent out from our church to the rest of the world.

Chapter three is written by Larry Jones who was the pastor of the International Baptist Church of Stuttgart, Germany. Jones shares what he discovered as important facets of becoming a valid international church. Typically, the international church has many cultures represented in their services. However, as Jones states, a hindrance to true growth occurs when “superior or dominant” cultures do not let “inferior or minority” cultures have their rightful place. Jones calls the method of how these

⁶ Martin, “Future,” 13.

different cultures should interact, the “John the Baptist principle.”⁷ According to Jones, John the Baptist said, “I must decrease so that He may increase,” meaning that John the Baptist was willing to let Christ become more important, when at the time of this statement, John the Baptist was a much more popular speaker and Christ was just beginning his earthly ministry.

Jones expounds on this statement by saying, “The dominant culture must always take the first step of humility. The dominant culture must lead with authentic humility. Otherwise, the dominants will always dominate.”⁸ This point is illustrated by military officers who interact with enlisted personnel by inviting them into their homes, and by English speakers who interact with those who did not have English as their primary language.⁹ Jones explains that after a dominant culture allows minority cultures to take a valued position in the church, the church truly became a “church for everyone from every nation. While English remained the language of choice during worship, small groups of shared languages met throughout the sanctuary.”¹⁰

According to Jones, a number of things played out from following this principle. They purchased flags for every culture represented and displayed them prominently in the church.¹¹ They purchased and used a special sound system so that multiple

⁷ Larry J. Jones, “Transitioning from an American Military Church to an International Congregation,” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington, KY: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 35.

⁸ Jones, “Transitioning,” 37.

⁹ Jones, “Transitioning,” 35.

¹⁰ Jones, “Transitioning,” 38.

¹¹ Jones, “Transitioning,” 38.

simultaneous translations could occur.¹² They changed their worship to represent the specific styles of the different cultures.¹³ “Believers from various countries were asked to plan the observance of the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁴ Each of these actions helped to give importance to and show value to those whose culture was not the dominant culture in the church. This, as Jones states, is vital to an international church that is truly multicultural in attendance.

Chapter five is submitted by Bob Marsh, the pastor of Converge International Fellowship in Darmstadt, Germany. Marsh states that prayer is vitally important for international churches. He says,

Spiritual warfare is a greater part of church planting than location, vision casting or fund-raising. The attack of the enemy is relentless and varied. It may be mechanical ..., economical ..., physical ..., emotional..., or spiritual ... Whatever tact he may take, we can be certain that the forces of darkness will do all they can to overcome the advancement of the kingdom of light. Prayer and fasting are the keys to victory.¹⁵

Marsh adds that one of the reasons for the need of extra prayer is that “Europeans face the most difficult of obstacles to overcome: prosperity and self-sufficiency. The financial, social and individual success and affluence of the average European has led him to dismiss the need for and existence of God.”¹⁶

Marsh includes a section on how to promote the international church. He states,

¹² Jones, “Transitioning,” 39.

¹³ Jones, “Transitioning,” 39.

¹⁴ Jones, “Transitioning,” 39.

¹⁵ Bob Marsh, “Planting Churches in the Shadow of Cathedrals, International Church Planting in Europe” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 58.

¹⁶ Marsh, “Planting,” 62.

“Europe has a distinct advantage of having one of the most modern and complete communications systems on the planet. Virtually every form of media and communication device is available.”¹⁷ He adds sections on the use of the internet and a website, on Facebook and Facebook advertising, on brochures and two-sided business cards where the second side can be used by members, on the possibility of advertising at English-speaking theaters, on using billboards, posters, Bible distributions, signs and banners.¹⁸ All of these ideas could be used throughout Europe.

Marsh closes his chapter by explaining how his church decided to adopt a different practice when members left their church. As stated before, international churches regularly see members depart for new assignments. So, instead of seeing this event with sadness, Marsh and his church decided to use this as a commissioning of a new missionary. When the time came to bid farewell to a church member, they would bring that member to the front where the elders of the church and those who were close friends would surround this member, lay their hands on them, and give them a commission from their church to preach the word wherever they were being sent.¹⁹

The researcher can affirm from his own experience that this action is appreciated very much by those who are leaving as well as those who are staying.

David Packer writes chapter six as the current pastor of the International Baptist Church of Stuttgart, Germany. He writes about transitioning from a missionary to an

¹⁷ Marsh, “Planting,” 66.

¹⁸ Marsh, “Planting,” 66-68.

¹⁹ Marsh, “Planting,” 69.

international church pastor.

Packer makes the argument that an international church pastor must be different from a normal church pastor or missionary. He states, “Pastors and leaders must make the painful but essential transition from being cultural citizens of only one nation, to becoming true internationals themselves – conversant in more than one language, comfortable in more than one culture, effective and competent to preach and counsel in a variety of cultures – the more the better.”²⁰

Packer illustrates this point by sharing an event that took place when he attended a meeting of international church pastors. Going through the breakfast buffet one morning, Packer put some fish on his plate only to be politely told that eating fish is not something that Americans do for breakfast. Packer states, “This was an action of rather benign ‘cultural imperialism’ and the pastors took on the role of cultural enforcers, determined to make sure I knew that Americans did not eat fish for breakfast.”²¹ Packer continues, “One of the first requirements to have any influence with people from other cultures is to ‘accept the acceptable’ in their culture without passing judgment,”²² such as eating fish for breakfast.

Packer declares himself quite strongly on this issue. He asserts that he does not feel that most international church pastors are well-trained “in understanding the importance of acculturation and respect of people from other cultures and societies...

²⁰ David Packer, “Transitioning from Missionary to International Church Pastor” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 80.

²¹ Crane, “Multicultural,” 81.

²² Crane, “Multicultural,” 81.

We need to do more than tolerate people different from us. We need to celebrate them.”²³

Chapter eight, *Multicultural Churches in Global Cities*,” is contributed by Michael Crane, Professor of Urban Missiology at the Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary. In this chapter, Crane gives various reasons for having multicultural churches in the major cities of today’s world. Crane does not expressly state he believes there is a difference between international churches and multicultural churches. In fact, the researcher believes Crane’s position, from an examination of his writing, is that international churches must be multicultural in nature if they are wanting to be truly international, and this researcher would agree.

Crane argues from Scripture that we must know our current world if we are to have any success. He states,

The call of the Great Commission to make disciples of every nation, means we must know our world. To add to this challenge, the world of our day is rapidly changing due to the twin forces of globalization and urbanization. In order to effectively make disciples of every nation, we need to understand our world and adapt our ministries, maximizing our ability to be ministers of the gospel.²⁴

Crane adds to this point by including more facts about the actual condition of our world:

Every hour thousands of people pick up their lives and move to a city. Global population growth in this century will primarily take place in cities...This rapid movement of humanity to the cities might be the most memorable fact of our century. Urbanization is not only about sheer numbers of people moving to cities; it is changing people, cultures, and societies at large.²⁵

²³ Crane, “Multicultural,” 81.

²⁴ Michael Crane, “Multicultural Churches in Global Cities” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington, KY: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 123.

²⁵ Crane, “Multicultural,” 81.

Crane continues his argument, stating that these great changes in our global society mean that life has drastically changed for people living in these urban areas. But, he states, “The church has not adapted to the realities of a rapidly urbanizing world...We need churches that are able to minister to urbanized people.”²⁶

Offering one result of globalization that should appeal to all English speakers, Crane states, “As the world globalizes, the number of languages spoken around the world is in steady decline. It is economically advantageous to master a global language.”²⁷ Cranes follows by stating that English is the major global language: “All around the world English is used in parliamentary meetings, business negotiations and university lectures. For many millions English is a first language, and for billions more it is an important second language.”²⁸

Crane closes his chapter, arguing that multicultural international churches should be considered important by those in church planting. He states, “Establishing multicultural churches in global cities, even in countries with minimal Christian presence, can become a launching point for more churches to be planted in the region.”²⁹ He continues,

International churches are not merely for expatriates in a foreign land, but can draw many locals who, for one reason or another, would not have attended local churches. Some are attracted to the multicultural nature of the church, others are drawn to those who work in similar careers, and others may see an international church as a better fit culturally than local churches. In any case, international churches can be an initial point of contact for someone who has

²⁶ Crane, “Multicultural,” 124.

²⁷ Crane, “Multicultural,” 127.

²⁸ Crane, “Multicultural,” 128.

²⁹ Crane, “Multicultural,” 129.

never heard the gospel.³⁰

This is in line with the thoughts of the researcher and his reasons for this thesis.

In chapter nine, “Responses of International Church Pastors to Ten Survey Questions,” Packer collected the responses of ten international church pastors to ten different questions about their experiences in their particular ministry. Seven of these ten pastors were serving international churches in Europe. Of the remaining three, one was from the Middle East, another was from Central America, and the last was from Southeast Asia.

The responses to each of the ten questions are helpful for any person who is contemplating ministry in an international church. A list of the questions that were asked are as follows:

1. What experience do you believe was the most helpful to prepare you to pastor an international church?
2. What is the most helpful advice you received to help you pastor an international church?
3. What did you wish someone had told you before you arrived on the field?
4. What is the greatest joy you have received as an international church pastor?
5. What is the greatest challenge you faced as an international church pastor?
6. Have you had to shepherd the church through a transition? Describe that experience.
7. What do you believe your church will be like twenty years in the future?
8. What are the most effective things you have done as a church to grow the church and build unity?
9. What would you do differently?
10. What one piece of advice would you like to share with other pastors of international churches?³¹

Overall, this little book is a good resource for any person who is involved in

³⁰ Crane, “Multicultural,” 130.

³¹ Packer, *International Pastor Experience*, 139-152.

international church work, or who is contemplating going into international church work. The contributing authors provide a good understanding of what is unique about an international church. Martin states,

These new English-language congregations typically included some of the following: international students, business people, diplomats, refugees, and nationals. The churches had members who were diverse in terms of race, culture, religious background, nationality, politics, and first language. The congregations were transient with two-to three-year typical assignments for most expat members.³²

He later states, “International churches have as their focus reaching expats, but most also have members who are nationals.”³³

In chapter two, David Fresch says “Most international churches [are] made up of people from many different nations and denominational backgrounds.”³⁴ In chapter eight, Crane offers thoughts on expats and local people, stating, “International churches are not merely for expatriates in a foreign land, but can draw many locals who, for one reason or another, would not have attended local churches.”³⁵ In his closing reflections on this subject, Packer states that in “the international or multicultural church there are a wide range of backgrounds, cultural values, Christian experiences.”³⁶

These declarations show that an international church is made up of many different groups of people, with a large portion of them being transients who are

³² Jimmy Martin, “*The Future of International Churches*,” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer, 5.

³³ Martin, “*Future*,” 9.

³⁴ David Fresch, “*A Third Culture Kid Experience as Pastor of an International Church*” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer (Lexington, KY: International Baptist Church Ministries, 2015), 19.

³⁵ Crane, “*Multicultural*,” 130.

³⁶ David Packer, “*Closing Reflections*” in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David Packer, 155.

dislocated from their original homes for one reason or another. What joins them together in a church is their belief in Jesus Christ and the English language as the main language of communication.

Look Who God Let into the Church:

*Understanding the Nature and Sharpening the Impact of a Multicultural Church*³⁷

Packer wrote *Look Who God Let into the Church* two years before he edited *The International Pastor Experience*. With Packer's experience as an international church pastor of three international churches, and his writings on international church pastors and work, he has become one of the leading scholars on international churches. It should be noted that this particular work is really about multicultural churches, and it does not necessarily apply across the board to all international churches, according to the researcher.

Packer begins this work with a good discussion, describing what defines an international church. He quickly turns to certain unique items that members from an international church have in common, saying, "Some of the things that the people have in common, other than Christ, are the expatriate experience, the understanding of a common language, and often children who are accustomed to people from different backgrounds. We call them, Third Culture Kids."³⁸

He continues, listing seven basic traits that he finds are common among growing

³⁷ David Packer, *Look Who God Let into the Church: Understanding the Nature and Sharpening the Impact of a Multicultural Church* (Growth Points: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013).

³⁸ Packer, *Look Who God*, 11.

churches in most nations. These seven traits are:

- A personable, caring pastor
- Biblical, relevant, interesting preaching
- A mobilized laity
- A Bible teaching program for all ages in small groups
- An advertised presence
- Worship music and experience that relate to the people
- Intentional planning for growth, to make room and resources available³⁹

Packer continues this discussion, bringing out four more criteria he believes relate specifically to the international church. Each of these four criteria deal with the leadership of the international church, showing the importance that leaders must specifically have in regard to international church work. These four criteria include:

- Leadership that lives by the expectation and creates a positive hope for others that something good can come from Christian fellowship that extends itself across cultures and nationalities. The leadership must do much more than tolerate differences; they must see them as positive.
- Leadership councils and representatives that include people from different cultures – meaning that they accept them as different, value them as brothers and sisters in Christ, treat them with respect and consideration, and include them in the fellowship.
- Leadership that listens to the concerns and ideas of people from other cultures. We like to be where we are celebrated, not where we are tolerated.
- Leadership that also has the good sense to know the limits of their flexibility, to know when, where, and how to draw the line on blending the congregation. There is a danger when leaders naively idealize cultural differences, because in each culture there are elements that the gospel and the Word of God need to confront and change.⁴⁰

What Packer does not state is that it is vitally important for the pastor to make sure he is leading by example and actively teaching other leaders these criteria. This means leadership development for an international pastor must include training in

³⁹ Packer, *Look Who God*, 12.

⁴⁰ Packer, *Look Who God*, 14.

these particular areas, as well as the normal topics, not just believing that those who are elected or appointed as leaders of an international church have a natural understanding of these multicultural issues.

Packer spends much of this book discussing subjects that may be considered as “Christian living,” and not necessarily focused strictly on subjects that only deal with international churches, or even multicultural churches. These subjects are discussed from Packer’s own life as a pastor of several international churches, and they can obviously be applied to international church work, but they can also be beneficial for pastors and leaders of normal churches. These subjects include dealing with major change in one’s life, the importance of good Bible-based studies for the church, the gift of repentance, spiritual warfare, and dealing with discontent. As an international church pastor, the researcher found the discussion on these subjects to be a valuable resource.

Toward the end of this work, Packer has a chapter that is called, “What I Would Do Differently.” The researcher found this chapter to be insightful and well worth the time for further study. Packer is very open in how he deals with the subject matter of this chapter, not sparing himself. Like other sections of his book, the content of this chapter can be applied to many situations, but because Packer is specifically discussing what he would do differently in regard to 12 years spent at the International Baptist Church of Singapore, his thoughts are worth giving more than just a passing glance by anyone interested in international church work. Of the different things that Packer mentions he would do differently, many of them deal with his position as the main

leader of the church. Packer states, “I would have prayed more and sought more of the power of God to go into meetings more prepared, prepared to resist the provocation of others.”⁴¹

Packer continues by stating he would also use his place as the main leader of the church to have more influence over other leaders. He would first do this by being “more selective in leadership decisions.”⁴² What he means is that he would have taken more time to choose properly the leaders in his church. Packer admitted there were people he approved for leadership who did not meet biblical qualifications to be a church leader, but were chosen because a person was needed, an area in which many of us need help and divine guidance. Packer continues this vein of thought, saying that not only would he be more cautious in who he appoints as a church leader, but he would also make a conscious effort to “broaden the base of some leadership.”⁴³ Packer explains that he would actively look to increase the size of the pool of people from which he would pick his leaders, looking beyond the group that has always been the leaders.

Packer also has advice on some cultural issues with which he would have liked to have had some help. Packer says he “would request a formal orientation to life and ministry in Singapore.”⁴⁴ Because he was already a seasoned missionary and pastor in Asia, it was generally thought that he did not need much cultural training. “There is the

⁴¹ Packer, *Look Who God*, 152.

⁴² Packer, *Look Who God*, 152.

⁴³ Packer, *Look Who God*, 154.

⁴⁴ Packer, *Look Who God*, 156.

assumption that we will know some things – customs, traditions, doctrinal issues, etc. – that are simply impossible for us to know.”⁴⁵ The researcher can confirm this is a danger he has seen happen at various times in his own ministry.

Packer has another admission dealing with the local culture that the researcher agrees with very much. He states that for his time at the International Baptist Church of Singapore he should have learned Chinese. The international pastor does not need much, if any, of a grasp of the local language for them to preach and minister to their congregation, because included in the definition of today’s global international church is that it uses English as their main language of communication. There is therefore a temptation to do very little language learning and the busier the pastor becomes, the easier it is to just stop all local language study. Packer states, “Learning the language would have helped me build relationships among the local Singaporean population that attended the church.”⁴⁶ This general principle is one that all pastors of international churches should try to follow. One does not need to speak the local language perfectly, but even a small effort is appreciated by the local population as it gives value to their culture, and it helps the pastor to be accepted by the local people.

In his final thoughts, Packer declares “The international, multicultural church is a growing reality in today’s religious landscape.”⁴⁷ Coming from Packer, a leading expert on international churches, this is good to hear, though it is also expected. Packer is not

⁴⁵ Packer, *Look Who God*, 156.

⁴⁶ Packer, *Look Who God*, 157.

⁴⁷ Packer, *Look Who God*, 182.

blinded by his work and ministry, realistically stating that fulfilling the Great Commission is going to be accomplished with both mono-cultural and multicultural churches. He states, “The Great Commission is to take the gospel into all nations and it can be fulfilled through the spread of mono-cultural churches as well as through ethnically diverse churches.”⁴⁸

Overall, this is a valuable book to read if one is working with international churches or interested in this type of ministry.

*Expatriate Ministry: Inside the Church of the Outsiders*⁴⁹

David Pederson refers to this work as a “trimmed-down version” of his dissertation completed at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven, Belgium.⁵⁰ While Pederson may call it trimmed-down, it is very well-researched and full of useful information for those who are interested in a study of international churches. Though much of the material Pederson shares is pertinent to international church work, the researcher notes that some of the information is dated. Pederson’s material is gathered from international churches around the world, and he presents his material so that it applies to international churches around the world, a broader scope than this study. He speaks from his own experience, having served as an international church pastor in the cities of Athens, Seoul, and Manila, and he presents material gathered from others

⁴⁸ Packer, *Look Who God*, 183.

⁴⁹ David Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry: Inside the Church of the Outsiders* (Seoul, Korea: Korean Center for World Missions, 1999).

⁵⁰ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, viii.

through interviews and questionnaires.⁵¹

Pederson explains why ministry to expatriates has grown, offering two possible reasons for the development of more international churches around the world. First, Pederson states that during the last ten years, the use of English has dramatically increased around the world through media expansion of satellite news, worldwide access to the Internet, and the tens of thousands of English-language teachers who have literally gone around the world.⁵² Today, English is “the official or recognized language in over 60 countries.”⁵³ He continues, stating, “Of the 2700 languages of the world, English has the richest vocabulary...and that English has penetrated even the most remote regions of the globe.”⁵⁴

Pederson develops this thought, stating that growth in expatriate ministry may be traced to the fall of Eastern Europe to democracy, because these new free-market countries brought in many new business people, many of whom used English as the means of communication. (Pederson does not state this, but what he has described is the result of globalization.) Because of what Pederson saw happening with the rapid growth of ministry to expatriates, he labeled this “the phenomenon of expatriate ministry.”⁵⁵

Pederson also provides a good definition of what should be considered an

⁵¹ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, viii.

⁵² Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 2.

⁵³ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 4.

⁵⁴ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 4.

⁵⁵ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 2.

international church. He states,

An international congregation (IC) describes an expatriate English-speaking Christian church, self-governing and often self-supporting, which is comprised of expatriate people and cross-cultural people who have not assimilated into the local indigenous church (if it exists). The IC is different from an ethnic immigrant church because an IC is made up of several different nationalities and a large portion of short-term people.⁵⁶

Later, Pederson adds another dimension to his definition of an international church. He states, "The English-speaking International Congregation is a multi-cultured, multi-denominational, local fellowship of expatriate people who are united in Christian belief and who share an identity as foreigners with English as a common language."⁵⁷

Pederson details four possible difficulties, which he refers to as "tensions," that he has witnessed and experienced in international churches. They are: 1) the spiritual tension; 2) the mission tension; 3) the ethical tension, and; 4) the network tension.⁵⁸

The spiritual tension is the tension that exists between "Babel and Tribal." "Babel refers to the desire for unity... Tribal refers to the need for community and the desire to associate with people of similar race or creed."⁵⁹ Pederson explains that in the international church, which is multi-cultural, a tension exists between the desire to be unified (the Babel label) with everyone working and fellowshiping together, and the desire to be with one's tribe instead of being with those from all over the world (the Tribal label). Babel is inclusive, stable, and American, whereas Tribal is exclusive,

⁵⁶ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 3.

⁵⁷ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 33.

⁵⁸ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 46.

⁵⁹ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 47.

creative, and international.⁶⁰ The social tension exists because an international church should not pattern themselves exclusively on either one of these positions but must be a mix of these two poles.

The mission tension is the “Oasis” or “Launching pad” tension that can exist in an international church. Characteristics of an Oasis church become evident when a church is considered a home, people see themselves as isolated from those unlike themselves, the church emphasizes fellowship over teaching, and fourthly they focus on ministering to expatriates. Characteristics of a Launching pad church become evident when the church is considered a mission, the members see themselves as integrating into the local society, the church has an emphasis on Biblical teaching over fellowship, and they focus on the indigenous people around the church.⁶¹ Pederson explains that different factors contribute to the Oasis-Launching pad tension, such as the rate and amount of turnover, the diversity of the expatriate community, and the proportion of long-term attendees versus relative newcomers.⁶² This tension comes from the fact that a successful, growing international church must be both an Oasis church and a Launching pad church.

The ethical tension between “Truth” and “Relationship” is a bit more difficult to understand, and it is not a tension felt by all international churches, but more by those churches who exist in countries that do not have the freedom of religion. This tension is

⁶⁰ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 46.

⁶¹ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 46.

⁶² Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 51.

common in countries where it is not necessarily legal for a Christian church to exist, such as China, or Islamic and Orthodox countries. It exists between the pastor and other believers dealing with the local authorities whose responsibility it is to grant them permission to exist in their area. The pastor must keep relationships with these authorities in good standing and must be careful not to say or do too much that might damage their ability to exist. Pederson shared that in Katmandu, “The government granted a visa to the pastor of the IC even though the government allows no missionary visas for church or evangelistic work. The church council subsequently adopted a constitution that forbids the membership of Nepali citizens, whether long or short-term.”⁶³ Pederson also shared about a pastor who was granted a journalist’s visa in Greece because it was illegal for someone to have a missionary visa in what was, at that time, Orthodox Greece.⁶⁴

This ethical tension is not an area with which one must be too concerned in current day Europe. Yet, there still is a tension between preaching the truth of the exclusivity of Christ as being the only way to heaven and building bridges between those of other faiths. With current day migration trends, this is a present reality.

The final tension is the “network” tension. This tension is between “dependence” and “independence.” Dependence is characterized by denominationalism, uniformity, and a dependence on outside support. Independence is characterized by interdenominational relationships and the ability to be self-

⁶³ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 53.

⁶⁴ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 53.

supporting.⁶⁵ Pederson shares dangers from both tensions, though he makes it clear that there is a greater benefit for an international church to be “independent.” He states, “Structures that impose uniformity upon the IC generally hinder the ability of the IC to reach a broad constituency of people. On the other hand, an independent IC may suffer financially or be exposed to heresy because there is no ecclesiological oversight.”⁶⁶ Because of this possible danger, Pederson shares a list of principles of interdependence that he suggests is helpful for international churches to follow. One principle is that “each local church joins an association of similar churches regionally.”⁶⁷ This is exactly what the researcher’s group is wanting to provide with the “International Christian Communities of Eurasia.” Pederson also suggests that it might be beneficial for international churches to “share resources ... with host country congregations”⁶⁸ which could lead to a greater understanding of the local culture and help with both churches’ financial situations.

In chapter six, Pederson discusses another tension, that of isolation and integration. In the researcher’s opinion, this is a mix of the four previous tensions. Pederson develops this argument by offering thoughts original to John Stott, who expresses that a church who believes in isolationism is a homogeneous church, which he considers to be defective. Stott says,

Heterogeneity is of the essence of the church, since it is the one and only community in the world in which Christ has broken down all dividing walls. The

⁶⁵ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 46.

⁶⁶ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 55.

⁶⁷ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 55.

⁶⁸ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 55.

vision is...a company drawn from “every nation, tribe, people and language” ... So we must declare that a homogeneous church is a defective church, which must work penitently and perseveringly towards heterogeneity.⁶⁹

Pederson goes on to state, “The homogeneous principle is applicable in ‘frontier’ situations where the gospel is gaining a foothold in a region.”⁷⁰

Pederson includes several pages which have the entire “Brussels Statement” written out. “The Brussels Statement was developed by the Ninth Conference of Church Executives Responsible for Foreign-Language Congregations of the Churches in Europe in 1973.”⁷¹ It calls for a “link between the expatriate churches and the national church.”⁷² This, again, emphasizes the need for the international church to integrate into its local culture, instead of isolating itself.⁷³

Pederson includes a chapter that addresses growth in the international church. In it, he states, “Dealing with turnover is the most significant issue in the international church,”⁷⁴ and suggests that even though the turnover in an international church is a big issue that hinders the overall growth of an international church, it is helpful to consider the impact that an international church has globally as a result. Pederson gives the following example:

⁶⁹ John Stott, *The Spirit, the Church and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1990), 397-398, in Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 59.

⁷⁰ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 59.

⁷¹ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 60.

⁷² Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 60.

⁷³ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 60-61. This “Brussels Statement” is referenced in a few other places, but this is the only place where the researcher could find the statement in its entirety. To not lose a record of this statement, the researcher will include the complete “Brussels Statement” in the appendix of this work, labelled as Appendix A.

⁷⁴ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 88.

I see five hundred visitors each year. Yet our church has plateaued at 250 attendees. At first, I was discouraged because the back door is nearly as wide as the front door. But later I came to see that over time our ministry touches far more lives than the weekly attendance figures show. I estimate that I have said goodbye to over 1000 regular attendees in our ten years of ministry. While I haven't put it on my resume, I am awed by the fact that I have been the pastor of a congregation of 1000 – just not all at once. This helps to keep my ministry in perspective.⁷⁵

Addressing the training of pastors who wish to minister in international churches, Pederson says various associations of international churches provide annual conferences. In addition, he states he has “not found a seminary or institution that offers ministry training for the IC pastor.”⁷⁶ Pederson continues, suggesting six courses that could be helpful for the international pastor. They are: 1) Historical Foundations of the International Congregation; 2) Leadership in the International Congregation; 3) Church growth in the International Congregation; 4) Preaching in the International Congregation; 5) Expatriate youth ministry; and 6) Expatriate Counseling.⁷⁷ Indeed, courses of this nature would be helpful to the international church pastor and his staff.

Pederson concludes with an appendix full of vital information. It includes sample surveys, questionnaires for advertising for an international pastor, sample work contracts, datelines for various organizations working with international churches, church constitutions, and an extensive bibliography.

Even though Pederson's work is out of print and copies are not readily available, the issues addressed remain pertinent today and will benefit all who are interested in

⁷⁵ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 96.

⁷⁶ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 127.

⁷⁷ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 127.

further study of international churches.⁷⁸

*A Guide to International Church Ministry: Pastoring A Parade*⁷⁹

Jack Wald writes from sixteen years of experience as pastor of the Rabat International Church in Morocco, Northwest Africa, an area not generally accepting of Christianity. This text is the second most recent book to come out about international church ministry, and it is the result of his Doctor of Ministry studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which he finished in 2015. Due to the religious atmosphere in Morocco, some of what he shares is not the same for those ministering in Europe. Still, Wald includes insights he received from twenty-three international church pastors in north Africa, the Middle-East, Europe and Asia.

Wald's book characterizes unique features of International Churches. Combined, they provide one of the most complete definitions of an international church. Although Wald does not present his information in this manner, his material is insightful for reaching a more complete understanding of what an International Church is.

Wald begins his work with a definition of an international church, sharing that the "Missional International Church Network" (MICN), a network of international churches mostly found in Asia, defines the international church as, "those churches around the world that primarily serve people of various nationalities (expatriates) and

⁷⁸ David J. Pederson is currently an assistant professor of Global Studies in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.

⁷⁹ Jack Wald, *A Guide to International Church Ministry: Pastoring a Parade* (Barton-Veerman, 2016).

church backgrounds living outside their passport (home) countries.”⁸⁰

Wald continues, adding other qualifications that further define an international church. He states that an international church often has a lower percentage of older people as compared to a local church. He says, “Those who attend the local churches will most likely live their senior years in their country, while that is unlikely for those who attend the international churches.”⁸¹ He continues, writing, “People tend to retire to their home countries so there are not many people over the age of sixty.”⁸² As a result, Wald shares that in the fifteen years of ministry in Rabat, his church only had seven funerals.

Wald states the use of English ranks very high for identifying an international church. Wald declares, “English may be a second, third, or fourth language for many of those who attend, but English will be the common language in the church.”⁸³ This is a common qualification of almost every definition of international churches.

Wald continues to define an international church by looking at characteristics that show the diversity found in international churches. He writes, “International churches are diverse nationally.”⁸⁴ By way of example, he reports having a total of 70 nations represented during his time in Rabat. Further, he states, “International churches are diverse racially,” sharing that every race was represented in his church,

⁸⁰ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 258-260.

⁸¹ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 266-267.

⁸² Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 450-451.

⁸³ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 260-261.

⁸⁴ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 418.

with people from every continent but Antarctica.⁸⁵

Wald adds to this discussion, saying, “International churches are diverse theologically and denominationally.”⁸⁶ He further says, “An international church reflects the denominations and worship styles of the world,” pointing out that his international church in Rabat had representatives from 40 different denominations on a typical Sunday, including Pentecostals, Mennonites, Quakers, those from most mainline denominations, and even some Catholics.⁸⁷ This means a worship service would include those who wish to use drums and clap their hands, and those who like organ music, or no music at all.

Continuing his discussion on the diversity found in International Churches, Wald writes, “International churches are diverse economically as well.”⁸⁸ He shares that within the congregation of an International Church one can have business people and diplomats, who both have good paying jobs, mixed with migrants who do not have enough money for what some would consider normal living expenses.

Wald mentions two more diversity characteristics of International Churches. He states that International Churches are diverse “educationally” and “linguistically.”⁸⁹ It is not unusual to have people who have earned doctorates and people who have very little formal education. It is unusual to have people who are monolingual. As an

⁸⁵ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 429-430.

⁸⁶ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 435.

⁸⁷ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 438-439.

⁸⁸ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 439.

⁸⁹ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 446, 448.

example, Wald shares that their church often had people who could speak three, four, or five languages, and they even had someone who “was able to speak fifteen languages.”⁹⁰

Wald says International Churches “are more transitional than most churches.”⁹¹ He shares that “60 percent of the congregation changes every two years” in his church in Rabat.⁹² This figure has not appeared in other books on international churches, but the general principle of a quarter to a third of congregation leaving every year is what is usually found. In any case, Wald makes a further comment about how transitions in an international church could, and he would say should, affect the length of time a pastor serves in the International Church. Wald states, “Because of the high rate of transition in international churches, it is helpful if the pastor serves for longer periods of time” because it provides the other members with a sense of security and stability.⁹³

So, even if Wald does not put together a full definition of what is an International Church, one can do so from what Wald writes. Therefore, from Wald’s writing:

An International Church is a church that can be found anywhere in the world, that specializes in ministry to people who are not living in their passport country, and that uses English as the language of communication since English is the most spoken and understood language around the globe. International Churches are different from other churches because they have a greater diversity nationally, theologically, denominationally, economically, educationally and linguistically whereas most other churches will not be as diverse across these areas. Because of these characteristics, International Churches tend to have younger and highly

⁹⁰ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 450.

⁹¹ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 453.

⁹² Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 456.

⁹³ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 2106-2107.

transitional congregations than the other churches around them.

Wald makes a helpful contribution for those who are either already ministering in international churches or who are wanting to, by sharing what he has learned that is different. Wald explains that some things must be done differently if one wishes to have success in international church ministry. Wald stresses the importance of a pastor being flexible:

A pastor who is rigid and has a definite way of doing things will not be helpful to an international church. Flexibility is demanded by the multiple cultures represented, multiple denominations and theologies represented, and by the continual turnover in the makeup of the community.⁹⁴

Flexibility is especially needed in preaching. Wald shares that preaching to a multid denominational, multicultural, and multinational congregation is full of challenges because of the need for appropriate illustrations. One may think he can use quotes from some classic work, or music piece, or even a classic movie, but most of these are culturally-based and are not known by many outside of “western” civilization. Wald says that he has heard from numerous international churches that their pastor is a fan of American football, but that most people do not understand American football, especially because it is not really played with your feet! Wald shares another example, stating, “The World Cup means much more to people in our church than the World Series.”⁹⁵ This is especially true because one involves the whole world and the other is found only in North America.

⁹⁴ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 2066-2069.

⁹⁵ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 487.

One area where Wald has greatly contributed to the conversation of international churches deals with the concept of unity. At the beginning of chapter four, Wald states, “The unity of the church is a driving concern of God throughout biblical history.”⁹⁶ Wald points out many aspects of unity throughout his work that can be helpful to local churches. There is generally more diversity in an international church, and one must work hard to have true unity. Wald shares, “In an international church we are working with God to bring unity to the diverse community he is creating.”⁹⁷ Wald adds to this, stating, “There will not be a Baptist heaven, a Mandarin heaven, a white heaven. Every nation, every tribe, every language, every people will be in heaven. In an international church we are getting practice for how it will be for eternity.”⁹⁸

With the great diversity that naturally exists in international churches, the pastor must be aware of his style of preaching and worship, and must remain flexible. Wald states, “Due to the diversity that exists in this congregation, the pastor leads with an understanding that there are various ways to worship and to remain faithful to the Scriptures.”⁹⁹ Wald also says that when preaching, the pastor should not focus on issues that are denominational. “Sermon series on denominational distinctives help people to become more Methodist, Assemblies of God, or Baptist, but they do not help us to become more Christian.”¹⁰⁰ Wald shares that his belief is that when one is preaching in

⁹⁶ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 1794-1795.

⁹⁷ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 1799-1800.

⁹⁸ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 1836-1838.

⁹⁹ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 2644-2646.

¹⁰⁰ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 2679-2680.

an international church, one should mainly focus on the Gospel, which is what all believers hold as a core value of their own faith.

Many would say that core values are important, but they would also have a hard time trying to define what exactly is included in their core values. Even for those with a Statement of Faith, it must be asked how they handle secondary faith issues. Wald presents his thoughts on this with the following:

What are not core issues? The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a core issue. Right away, anyone from a Pentecostal background will disagree. This is certainly a core issue for Pentecostals. But I say again that when Pentecostals and Evangelicals do not agree on an issue, it is not a core issue. What happens in communion is not a core issue. Baptism by immersion or sprinkling, as an adult or as an infant, is not a core issue. Women preaching in the church is not a core issue. Some believe God created the universe six or seven thousand years ago in six twenty-four hour days and others believe the world is 14 billion years old and life on earth developed through a process of evolution. God created. This is a core belief. But how he created is not a core issue. A particular millennial position is not a core issue.¹⁰¹

While we may not all agree with each of these statements, they do make a valuable contribution to the overall discussion of guarding unity in the midst of diversity. As the globalization of the world continues, this issue will become more and more important for every kind of church, both the local monocultural church that is becoming multicultural and the international church.

Wald's work is an important work that has aided the understanding and continuing growth of international churches.

¹⁰¹ Wald, *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Kindle 3297-3303.

*How to Become a Multicultural Church*¹⁰²

Douglas Brouwer was the pastor of the International Protestant Church of Zurich, Switzerland, a position that he has held since 2014,¹⁰³ when this book was published. This is the newest book on international churches, having come out in 2017 in printed format and now in 2018 in Kindle format. This book is titled “How to Become a Multicultural Church” and as the title suggests, it is about the multicultural aspect of churches.

Brouwer writes from the perspective of being the pastor of the International Protestant Church of Zurich and as such ties his writings to influencing both international churches and multicultural churches. This researcher believes that Brouwer would say that international churches should try to be multicultural churches as well, though he does not actually state this. Brouwer does use the generally accepted definition of a multicultural church stating that they are those churches “where no racial or ethnic group amounted to more than 80 percent of the congregation.”¹⁰⁴ But Brouwer does not mention any of the unique aspects of an international church, most specifically where 50 percent or more of the congregation are living outside of their passport country.

Brouwer spends a considerable time in his book talking about the importance of being a multicultural church, a topic that could be valuable to all churches, not just

¹⁰² Douglas J. Brouwer, *How to Become a Multicultural Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017).

¹⁰³ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, back cover.

¹⁰⁴ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 4.

international churches. Brouwer states that a multicultural church is “one where there is an intentional engagement of cultures, not just a mix of races and nationalities.”¹⁰⁵

He continues by showing that what happened at Pentecost was of great importance to the early church in that this diverse group of “people found unity in their diversity.”¹⁰⁶

Brouwer details many experiences as to how he dealt with keeping disunity to a minimum in his church. He states that the phrase, “In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity” is in practice very messy and problematic.¹⁰⁷ One of the best ways to minimize difficulties, Brouwer states, is to really listen. He says that more than learning to speak very clearly, based on his experience he would say that “learning to listen, really listen, is actually far more important.”¹⁰⁸

Brouwer continues with the same line of thinking by including an entire chapter dedicated to learning the language. Being as Brouwer is writing from Zurich, Switzerland he talks about the importance of learning Swiss German. Brouwer says that his Swiss church members want to know if he is committed to learning their language, their culture, their history, their way of life. Brouwer continues this discussion by stating that those people who live in a foreign country and who have refused to learn the local language, even after multiple years, have a problem with arrogance.¹⁰⁹ This is

¹⁰⁵ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 66.

¹⁰⁸ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 82.

¹⁰⁹ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 101.

an area that according to Brouwer is a “blind spot” for many Americans.¹¹⁰ He relates a personal experience that occurred while he was pastoring a church in Florida. There were six women in his church, all from Latin American countries who had married American expatriate husbands and then had moved to Florida. Brouwer shares that he should have started learning Spanish on his first day at that church. He says, “Spanish is the second most-spoken language in the region. And in many neighborhoods, it is the most spoken language. My church should have treated language learning as an expectation for me and for every member of the staff. How were we going to reach the people in our community with the good news of the gospel if we didn’t learn to speak their language, if we showed no interest whatsoever in their culture?”¹¹¹ This is the type of discussion one expects to have with personnel who are working in a foreign country, but here Brouwer is applying this reasoning to an American church. The researcher believes that this type of thinking should spread to many places in America.

Brouwer also mentions that in his opinion it is important for all pastors everywhere to learn the local spiritual language. According to Brouwer, each church is unique in their form of language, meaning the essence of what influences them and their spiritual lives. For example, if one’s church is in a university setting, then the pastor would do well to keep up with some academic journals so he knows what his congregation is thinking about.

This book, *How to Become a Multicultural Church*, is a worthwhile tool for those

¹¹⁰ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 101.

¹¹¹ Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 102.

who are involved in international church ministry. Most international churches will also be multicultural churches, so don't let the title of this book dissuade you from its value. Most of the issues discussed in the chapters are worthwhile for any pastor to consider, but especially pastors of international churches.

At the end of the book, in the Afterword written by Richard Davis, we are reminded of two essentials for those of us who follow Christ. Davis writes that these essentials are: "the lordship of Jesus and the authority of the Bible."¹¹² According to Davis, these are the two legs of the church and everything else is secondary. Brouwer spent most of his work debating how one can keep unity with so much diversity in a multicultural church. An intriguing issue.

*The High Impact Church: A Fresh Approach to Reaching the Unchurched*¹¹³

As the researcher began reading books and talking with various people about international church work, the name Linus Morris was inevitably mentioned. Morris has written a work that many people see as the gold standard for international church work.

However, this text does not exclusively detail how to run, operate, and minister in an international church. Morris has a broader goal in mind than just international churches, presenting his work as a key to reach the entire world with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Morris states that, for the most part, churches have become irrelevant to the current culture, and many churches are "static in the United States and in decline in

¹¹² Brouwer, *Become a Multicultural Church*, 175.

¹¹³ Linus J. Morris, *The High Impact Church: A Fresh Approach to Reaching the Unchurched* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Christian Associates International, 1988).

Europe.”¹¹⁴ Morris studied what needed to happen to reverse the trend, and this work is the result of that study.

Morris defines a “high impact” church as a church “that is innovative in evangelism, worship, pastoral care, preaching and organizational structure.”¹¹⁵ He adds, “Churches can and must change if they expect to attract the unchurched and lift Christianity from being an irrelevant subculture within society.”¹¹⁶

This book can be used by anyone who desires guidance in ministering in churches that wish to be relevant to the society around them. The principles set forth are equally valid for those planting and ministering in churches in the United States as they are for those planting and ministering in churches in Europe, or elsewhere in the world.

This book may be a gold standard for international church work because Morris, at the time of this publication, was leading the mission organization known as “Christian Associates International, whose goal is to establish high-impact churches in major cities all over Europe.”¹¹⁷ From the researcher’s experience with Christian Associates International, the churches that they lead in Europe are international churches, very similar to the type of church that the researcher’s own group, “International Christian Communities, Eurasia,” is promoting. It is for this reason that Morris and his work are

¹¹⁴ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 22.

¹¹⁵ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 22.

¹¹⁶ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 24.

held in high esteem by those involved in international church ministry.¹¹⁸

Morris pulls many illustrations from his own experiences of planting international churches in Geneva, Switzerland and Amsterdam, Netherlands. He emphasizes that believers must focus on ministry in the cities of the world adding that, “By the year 2025, 60 percent of the world’s eight billion people will likely be urban dwellers.”¹¹⁹ Morris continues, saying, “The city is the most strategic mission field in the world today. The unreached (but reachable) masses of people living in and around cities can be won to Christ through a fresh approach to the church.”¹²⁰ Morris argues, “To win the city, we must understand its diversity... Cities are made up of diverse subcultures...are pluralistic societies.”¹²¹

Morris offers many guidelines and principles to help those who want their churches to be “high impact” churches, or in other words, those who want their churches to be relevant to their societies. These may be used by any person in church ministry, whether or not it is international church work. For example, discussing the importance of the pastor’s spiritual vitality, Morris states, “A church will only be as vital as the degree to which its leaders and members have a dynamic relationship with Christ.”¹²² He also explains the benefit of studying the target group one wants to reach.

¹¹⁸ Since the publication of this work, Morris has transitioned away from leading Christian Associates International and Christian Associates International has also just recently changed their name to “Communitas International.” For more information see: <http://christianassociates.org/who/history/>.

¹¹⁹ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 149.

¹²⁰ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 166.

¹²¹ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 149.

¹²² Morris, *High Impact Church*, 75.

Morris references Ralph Neighbour's work that has classified "unbelievers into two categories – those who are "near" (Type A) and those who are "far" (Type B) from salvation.... Type A unbelievers are open to the message; Type B unbelievers are not yet open to the message, but are open to the messenger,"¹²³ explaining how one needs to use different approaches to evangelism with these two "types" of unbelievers.

This book has many good principles that could apply to anyone involved in church planting, and it should be read and studied by all who want their church to become relevant in their world. However, if one is looking for a text on international church work, this is not that book.

*Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*¹²⁴

This text may rank among the top books on church planting. It is a complete guide to church planting, and should be considered a primary resource by all involved in church planting. Ott and Wilson are seasoned church planters with years of experience as church planters, coaches of church planters, and seminary professors. Many examples in the book come from international sources. These, along with examples from the United States, make the potential applications of this book valid for doing church planting in any country of the world.

Ott and Wilson cover the whole range of church planting, from a biblical foundation of why we do it, to strategic considerations in starting a church plant, as well

¹²³ Morris, *High Impact Church*, 160.

¹²⁴ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

as critical factors one may face in a church plant, including seeing one's church plant through to maturity and reproduction on its own.¹²⁵

The remarkable part of this work is they have included a short section that discusses the international church plant. The section is only two pages long (out of over 400 pages), but it contains a thorough synopsis of the positives and negatives that one can expect when ministering in an international church.

Ott and Wilson state that the international church is "intentionally international in character," that they typically use English as "the language of ministry," and that they initially focus on reaching the expatriates living in their area, which would include "native English speakers from the international business community, diplomatic corps, students, refugees, or guest workers."¹²⁶ Following this, they add, "It is hoped that the international church plant will attract local residents who either wish to improve their English language abilities or are curious about the Christian faith."¹²⁷ This short section offers many other examples of the positive impact an international church can have.

Ott and Wilson also mention pitfalls of an international church. If one has the goal of reaching beyond the expatriate community to reach the regular residents, having an international church "is an option only where the target city is cosmopolitan with a sizable international community."¹²⁸ In other words, the overall population must include enough expatriates if one wishes to have a sustainable church plant.

¹²⁵ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, v-vi.

¹²⁶ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 131.

¹²⁷ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 131.

¹²⁸ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 132.

Ott and Wilson also mention that a possible drawback of an international church plant is that “Christianity maintains a largely foreign face.”¹²⁹ This is important for those working in an international church to realize, doing what they can to communicate clearly that the gospel is for all peoples.

Ott and Wilson have a great deal of advice on church planting, and even if most of their work does not specifically speak to the international church plant, much of it is indeed pertinent. Ott and Wilson mention that it is important for all church plants to cooperate with other churches in their city. However, they warn that “a spirit of independence tends to dominate American attitudes toward all of life, and it is often reflected in the way local churches relate to one another.”¹³⁰ American Christians must not think that they should automatically oversee every situation; they must be humble and be willing to let local believers lead. This is especially true of an international church plant when participating in a joint activity with local churches, as it is already considered as being from outside of the local area, led by foreigners, and whose attendees are largely foreigners. Those involved in an international church plant must remember that the Great Commission applies to them, too. They must reach out to those in their neighborhoods, as well as reaching out to those in attendance.

Ott and Wilson also mention possible expectations one may have when working with a multicultural team. Specifically, they discuss the value of a multicultural church planting team, but the same principles apply to the international church plant, and

¹²⁹ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 132.

¹³⁰ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 299.

maybe even more because an international church is multicultural at its core. Ott and Wilson state the positives of a multicultural team are that they help “counteract the perception of cultural superiority, favor mutual learning, model unity and diversity in the body of Christ, and can open doors to diverse communities in urban settings.”¹³¹ This is exactly what one observes in an international church plant.

Ott and Wilson also mention that multicultural teams bring certain challenges. These challenges include how to deal with “conflicting expectations, values, and leadership styles.”¹³² They state that having a multicultural team (or a multicultural international church in the case of the researcher) is “achievable with proper orientation, mature and sensitive leadership, an attitude of servanthood, patient communication, and a desire for ongoing learning.” This is an excellent goal for all churches that are multicultural, and especially for international churches. This fits right along with the work of DeYmaz and Li discussed next.

*Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them*¹³³

Doctors Mark DeYmaz (DMin) and Harry Li (PhDEE) both currently serve as pastors at the Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas. DeYmaz and Li take turns writing various portions of this text to discuss the challenges of a church made up of people

¹³¹ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 339.

¹³² Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 339.

¹³³ Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li, *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

from multiple ethnic backgrounds. They begin by stating, “If the kingdom of heaven is not segregated, why on earth is the church?”¹³⁴ DeYmaz and Li do not lightly ask the preceding question, declaring “The multi-ethnic church is not only biblical but also critical to the advance of the gospel in the twenty-first century.”¹³⁵ It is safe to say the authors are completely convinced of the necessity of multi-ethnic church for the future of Christianity.

This intriguing book shows a natural similarity between international churches and multi-ethnic churches, even though it is written to address the church situation of the United States of America. DeYmaz and Li point out that sociologists have defined a multi-ethnic church as one where “no single ethnic group makes up more than 80 percent of the congregation.”¹³⁶ They dedicate most of their writing to the description of multi-ethnic churches and specific issues of which one needs to be aware when ministering in a multi-ethnic church. In addition, they cite the work of Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim in their book *United by Faith*, give a brief history of multi-ethnic churches, and mention the current state of American churches.¹³⁷

DeYmaz and Li share that one main church planting principle used during the last half of the twentieth century in the United States was called the “homogeneous unit principle (HUP). In short, this principle suggests that churches grow fastest when

¹³⁴ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 133.

¹³⁵ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 153-154.

¹³⁶ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 1733-1734.

¹³⁷ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 168.

they're homogeneous – made up of people from the same ethnic, economic, and educational background.”¹³⁸ The problem with the homogeneous unit principle, as DeYmaz and Li point out, is that it has “had the unintended effect of justifying the segregation of local congregations along ethnic and economic lines,” which has led American churches “further away from principles and practices that defined New Testament churches such as existed at Antioch and Ephesus.”¹³⁹

DeYmaz and Li continue to point out, through the work of Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith in their book, *Divided by Faith*, some of the results of having a large majority of churches who are following the “HUP” methodology. We are told that Emerson and Smith stated that at the turn of this last century, 92.5 percent of all American churches “could be classified as ‘monoracial.’”¹⁴⁰ This means that only 7.5 percent of all American churches have at least 20 percent of their congregation being from a non-dominant ethnic group. Looking more closely at these figures, Emerson and Smith point out “that approximately 12 percent of Catholic churches, less than 5 percent of evangelical churches, and about 2.5 percent of mainline Protestant churches could be described as multiracial.”¹⁴¹

DeYmaz and Li continue to discuss this issue because they are convinced of the importance of multi-ethnic churches. They state what Emerson and Smith discovered through their studies a very troubling result: “Their statistical research confirmed that

¹³⁸ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 171-172.

¹³⁹ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 174-177.

¹⁴⁰ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 196-197.

¹⁴¹ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 199-200.

when compared with other social institutions, the church, far from representing the diversity and unity of the kingdom of God, was actually the primary institution perpetuating systemic (institutional) racism in our society.”¹⁴² Indeed, this is a shocking statement and worth further study, but it is not the focus of this research project, except to lay out a justification for international churches.

DeYmaz and Li share that, at the end of Emerson and Smith’s book, “Emerson and Smith effectively argue that the church is a sleeping giant in the effort to dismantle institutional racism in the United States. They propose that one of the best ways to address this systemic problem is to establish multiracial, multi-ethnic churches in which all people are welcome, loved, and cross-culturally engaged.”¹⁴³ This is exactly what DeYmaz and Li want to communicate in their own book.

As previously stated, this book is intriguing because of the many similarities between what DeYmaz and Li call a multi-ethnic church and how the researcher has defined international churches. DeYmaz and Li state that for a multi-ethnic church to be successful, the “pastors and church planters must make it a priority to pursue cross-cultural competence if they hope to discover the nuances of each culture and their effect on the overall body of Christ.”¹⁴⁴ This is also true for a pastor or church planter ministering in an international church. However, in an international church, the differing cultures may come from anywhere around the world, meaning the pastor not

¹⁴² DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 202-204.

¹⁴³ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 213-216.

¹⁴⁴ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 2051-2052.

only must deal with ethnic differences, but must also consider the nationality and language differences in order to work to make those differences a minimal problem.

Still, as DeYmaz and Li state, there will undoubtedly be problems. They declare, “If you lead, or hope to lead, a multi-ethnic church, you (like Paul) must prepare to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, misrepresented, and misjudged as you relate cross-culturally with others.”¹⁴⁵ Continuing along that same line of thought, DeYmaz and Li state, “Without a doubt, serving a homogeneous congregation filled with people who are just like us has its challenges, but it is certainly much easier and more comfortable than ministering in a multi-ethnic environment.”¹⁴⁶ While this is true, it could be argued that serving a multi-ethnic congregation in America might be much easier and more comfortable than ministering in an international church.

DeYmaz and Li do share ideas to help the leading of a multi-ethnic congregation to be a bit easier, and these ideas could be applied to leading an international church. DeYmaz and Li state, “Instead of condemning the things that divide us, the obvious differences we have, we must choose to focus on those points of connection that we share in common.”¹⁴⁷ They continue, sharing that “when believers from every background begin to pray together, an undeniable unity emerges that elevates the spirit of oneness and diminishes the spirit of division.”¹⁴⁸ This is what we all want to experience in our churches, be they mono-ethnic, multi-ethnic, or international

¹⁴⁵ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 2386-2387.

¹⁴⁶ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 2225-2226.

¹⁴⁷ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 2093-2094.

¹⁴⁸ DeYmaz and Li, *Multi-Ethnic Church*, Kindle 2868-2869.

churches with people from around the world, speaking many languages, and representing many different races.

*United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*¹⁴⁹

DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim have written a book that provides a good history of multiracial congregations in America. They briefly describe New Testament churches, such as Antioch, as examples that should be followed today. They state the New Testament “church was multicultural and multilingual from the first moment of its existence.”¹⁵⁰ However, most of the book concentrates on the years 1600 to 2000, the basic timeframe of the founding of America by European colonialists to our present day, or close to it. They end their work by presenting the multiracial congregation as an answer to the problem of race. Even though their work largely focuses upon the North American church scene, many points of interest could be applied to international churches in Europe.

The authors discuss what an integrating church resembles. They state that a truly diverse church means that those who attend will not enjoy “more than 75 percent of what’s going on.”¹⁵¹ They make this statement so that people realize the importance of every person giving up something which they consider to be important in a worship

¹⁴⁹ Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁰ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 17.

¹⁵¹ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 77.

service so that someone else can have what they feel is important. The authors state, “An integrating church is characterized by the need to be content with less than total satisfaction with everything.” This same mentality is necessary in an international church, especially one that has many countries and cultures present. This is important for the leaders of international churches to realize, making use of this in their planning of services and in their preaching.

Following this line of thought, the authors bring out another point about integration and assimilation that may be one of the most thought-provoking statements in their work. Explaining that there is a blind spot about which some churches must be careful, they state, “Much of what is articulated as biblical unity is actually an invitation to assimilate into white definitions of Christianity.”¹⁵² Another way to state this is that many of our church members who are a part of the majority group of their church feel that the minority groups are fitting in well with the rest of the church when the minority groups are becoming more and more like the majority group. The sense of unity that may be present in these groups are not because there is real unity, but because the minority groups have decided that they cannot display any of their own uniqueness. Therefore, each church must be careful that their own majority culture does not have a complete monopoly on all aspects of their church life.

The same idea is true for international churches. Usually, the American culture in an international church acts like the majority group, whether they are a real majority or not. Because American culture has dominated the world over these last 100 years or

¹⁵² DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 123.

so, it is all too easy for Americans to think that their way of doing things is the correct way. Thus, in an international church, Americans tend to describe biblical unity as what happens when the other cultural groups in the church agree to the traditions of the American church. If the authors are correct, and this researcher believes that they are, all cultural groups in an international church, and especially the American group, must be careful to let other groups have a valid place in the life of the church. So, no group in the international church is given complete control over all aspects of church life, but each group willingly gives up some things so that every group can have a valid input into the overall church life.

The authors continue to develop their thesis, showing how the above looks when these principles are put into practice. They state, “Worship style of most integrated multiracial congregations tends to be a mixture of several different racial worship styles.”¹⁵³ They continue, pointing out that church leadership has an important part to play in being truly multiracial: “Racially diverse leadership is vital so that the perspectives of several racial groups can influence the major decisions of the church.”¹⁵⁴ In fact, according to the authors, the entire church program from bottom to top must be adapted to intentionally reflect the desire to be a multiracial church. They state, congregations “need to begin redesigning their mission statements, worship styles, and social practices in ways that reflect the New Testament call to be multiracial.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 171.

¹⁵⁴ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 172.

¹⁵⁵ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 180.

These points are also valid for an international church to be truly international. Worship styles, diverse leadership, mission statements, social practices should not be controlled by one dominant culture but must be shared in order to resemble what the real world is like.

*Planting Churches in Muslim Cities: A Team Approach*¹⁵⁶

As the title suggests, one may be led to think Greg Livingstone advocates the planting of international churches in Muslim cities as a way to reach and convert Muslims. However, this is not the main premise of this work. Livingstone states toward the end of his book, “This study has been an attempt to describe how a team of expatriates can establish a Muslim convert church in a Muslim city.”¹⁵⁷

When one realizes the main purpose of this book is to encourage church planting among Muslim converts, and that when it does reference possible international church work, these references are secondary in importance to Livingston, it becomes possible to acquire some points that are still valid for international church work. At the same time, one must be very careful not to apply some of Livingstone’s ideas because they could be detrimental for international church work.

When Livingston explains how to put together a church planting team which would have as its purpose to plant a church for Muslim converts in a particular Muslim city, he states that a good option for a seminary graduate is to “pastor an international

¹⁵⁶ Greg Livingston, *Planting Churches in Muslim Cities: A Team Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993).

¹⁵⁷ Livingston, *Planting Churches*, 225.

church for westerners”¹⁵⁸ in that city. He continues by saying that it would be good if that pastor had “a heart for the Muslims, who in turn would encourage others seeking to plant churches, or at least witness to Muslims.”¹⁵⁹ Livingston basically sees the international church as a tool to be used to plant churches of Muslim converts. This is not bad, but it cannot be the main purpose of the international church because the pastor has a responsibility to shepherd and disciple his congregation, too.

Where the researcher has some disagreement with Livingstone is the fact that Livingstone appears to be totally committed to the HUP principle of church growth for Muslim converts. Livingstone presents the “homogeneous unit principle” of Donald McGavran, and what Phil Parshall has labeled, “cultural contextualization, or sensitivity...of being a Muslim to the Muslims,” as the necessary outcome for Muslim converts.¹⁶⁰ This researcher is not working specifically with Muslims, but from what has been observed in his years of ministry, this could be a good beginning point for a Muslim convert. But the researcher believes the eventual goal should be to incorporate the Muslim converts into a regular church, which could be an international church in Muslim countries. This seems to fit better with the biblical principles of unity in our diversity, of being one church with people from every race and tongue, as the overall thesis of the work by DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey and Kim advocate.

Livingstone shows a great heart for reaching the Muslim world with the Gospel,

¹⁵⁸ Livingston, *Planting Churches*, 93.

¹⁵⁹ Livingston, *Planting Churches*, 93.

¹⁶⁰ Livingston, *Planting Churches*, 56.

presenting that a good way to do so is to actively plant churches for Muslim converts in Muslim cities. Unfortunately, this text does not hold much promise for those who want to be better equipped for international church work in Europe.

Getting With God's Program: Expatriates in International Ministry:

*A Critical Appraisal from a Missionary Kid/Mission Director*¹⁶¹

David Befus grew up as the child of missionaries and is the current mission director for Latin America Mission. This book is not about international churches but is about being involved in foreign missionary work as an occupation. Befus attempts to give rational arguments about why people should consider being involved in international ministry. He states, "Getting paid as a professional to do ministry full-time is a fantastic career opportunity."¹⁶² Although the focus of this book is not working in international churches, there are a few points worth mentioning.

In his chapter on "The Centrality of the Gospel," Befus writes, "In many overseas contexts, the Kingdom message can be presented in a holistic manner, embracing the needs of the full person, just as it was in the first church outreach."¹⁶³ Befus makes this statement in comparison with churches in America where he implies that the whole Gospel is not often found. On the other hand, international churches around the world can more easily be involved in programs that are holistic in nature simply because in an

¹⁶¹ David R. Befus, *Getting with God's Program: Expatriates in International Ministry: A Critical Appraisal from a Missionary Kid/Mission Director* (Miami, FL: Latin America Mission, 2001).

¹⁶² Befus, *Getting with God's Program*, 19.

¹⁶³ Befus, *Getting with God's Program*, 29.

international church one is dealing with many cultures, giving the church the possibility of more outreaches in more places and focused on more people.

After continuing to discuss holistic ministry and international ministry, Befus states, “In an increasingly multicultural world where poverty levels have actually gotten worse, the overseas church can also teach the U.S. church a lot about the exciting opportunities to put faith in action with holistic outreach.”¹⁶⁴ The researcher found this to be true when he became involved in a ministry reaching out to women caught up in prostitution, organized crime, and human trafficking. There were many churches in the U.S.A. that wanted to know how they could help and become involved.

Befus states another important principle for international churches to keep in mind. He says, “It is imperative that overseas ministry connect itself to what God is doing in the national church.”¹⁶⁵ It may be that an international church will see its best results if it is somehow affiliated with a national church. Both the national church and the international church have shortcomings as to who they are reaching, but together they can better fulfill the Great Commission.

¹⁶⁴ Befus, *Getting with God's Program*, 36.

¹⁶⁵ Befus, *Getting with God's Program*, 41.

Dissertations

“International Churches as Launching Pads for Mission to Indigenous Peoples”¹⁶⁶

Dan Bowers wrote his dissertation based upon his own experience serving as the pastor of International Christian Fellowship (ICF) in Caracas, Venezuela. Upon Bowers arrival in Caracas in 2000, he was surprised to find that the International Christian Fellowship had already successfully planted a “Spanish-language congregation that developed into an independent church.”¹⁶⁷ Bowers was also surprised to discover that the ICF attracted a great number of indigenous people, as well as the expected expatriates in and around Caracas. Bowers states, “These nationals were attracted to the church by their desire to use the English language and by the presence of expatriate business people.”¹⁶⁸

Bowers states that the purpose of his research was “to understand and evaluate the opportunity that international churches have to launch out to indigenous peoples, and to make suggestions for those that wish to plant national churches.”¹⁶⁹ He continues by saying that his “hope is that this research will help international churches and North American mission boards to realize the missionary potential of IC’s, so that they may work together to seize the opportunity to evangelize indigenous peoples in

¹⁶⁶ Dan P. Bowers, “International Churches as Launching Pads for Mission to Indigenous Peoples” (D.Min. diss., Denver Seminary, 2003).

¹⁶⁷ Bowers, “International Churches,” 2.

¹⁶⁸ Bowers, “International Churches,” preface.

¹⁶⁹ Bowers, “International Churches,” 5.

areas that have been resistant to missionary activity.”¹⁷⁰ Bowers states this slightly differently later in his work by declaring that “this paper considers whether international churches may be one way of taking the Gospel to the urban centers of the world.”¹⁷¹

Numerous nuggets throughout the dissertation can benefit any who are ministering in international churches or who might be interested in learning about international churches. Bowers’ dissertation provides a brief history of international churches and discusses many of the issues these churches have. For this reason, this dissertation is a valuable resource for any person wanting to learn about international church ministry with the view of ministering in an international church.

Bowers is good at using other people’s research material and quotes them, with proper use of references, throughout his dissertation. A couple of the reference books that Bowers uses extensively are David Pederson’s *Expatriate Ministry: Inside the Church of the Outsiders*, and Linus Morris’s *The High Impact Church: A Fresh Approach to Reaching the Unchurched*.

Bowers states that it was Pederson’s work that “first suggested that IC’s could have a missionary impact on the indigenous people.”¹⁷² Pederson’s statement is what pushed Bowers to develop the subject of his own research. It is also somewhat related to what I am researching in European international churches. Bowers states, confirming

¹⁷⁰ Bowers, “International Churches,” 5.

¹⁷¹ Bowers, “International Churches,” 14.

¹⁷² Bowers, “International Churches,” 8.

what the researcher has discovered, “Very little has been written on international church ministry. Preliminary indications were that only one book and a few articles had been written on this specific subject.”¹⁷³ Little has changed in this regard, even 17 years after Pederson’s work.

Much of Bowers’ research is an in-depth study of the steps the ICF used to plant the indigenous and independent church, *Confraternidad Cristiana Internacional*. Bowers combines the results of his study of the methodology used by the ICF with a survey that he distributed to other international churches, and then he presents some suggestions as to how international churches can plant indigenous churches.

One of Bowers’ suggestions seems a bit confusing. He states that in order for an international church to plant an indigenous church they must prepare themselves to become a “High-Impact” church.¹⁷⁴ Bowers attempts to clarify this statement by explaining that this is a church “that manifests a freshness of life and that demonstrates effectiveness in reaching out to expatriates.”¹⁷⁵ He continues, stating that this church “must also have a vision for making an eternal impact on the indigenous people of the city and the nation in which it exists.”¹⁷⁶ These ideas come from Linus Morris, the president of Christian Associates International at that time.¹⁷⁷

Bowers continues in his dissertation by enumerating seven areas which he says

¹⁷³ Bowers, “International Churches,” 7.

¹⁷⁴ Bowers, “International Churches,” 161.

¹⁷⁵ Bowers, “International Churches,” 161.

¹⁷⁶ Bowers, “International Churches,” 161.

¹⁷⁷ Bowers, “International Churches,” 161.

make up a “high-impact” church. These are explained in his writings, and listed here:

- 1) High-impact Location;
- 2) High-impact Leadership;
- 3) High-impact Congregation;
- 4) High-impact Vision;
- 5) High-impact Vitality;
- 6) High-impact Outreach;
- 7) High-impact Sensitivity.¹⁷⁸

So, according to Bower, for a church to prepare itself to plant an indigenous church that church must have these characteristics. While these characteristics are necessary, the confusion with this list is the idea of being a “high-impact” church. What church planter would say he does not want to have a “high-impact” church? A church planter that publicizes he is a low-impact leader and is looking to plant a low-impact church would not be successful anywhere in the world! The researcher believes that if these characteristics of being a “high-impact” church were simply stated as the goals for a church plant, leaving off the exact words of “high-impact,” these goals might actually have a greater influence on the founding of church plants than if church planters had to always deal with stating that they are “high-impact.” If an international church plant publicized they had these seven characteristics, without stating that they were “high-impact,” they would actually be better accepted by the local, indigenous churches than if they stated they were “high-impact,” which carries more of a colonialist, or superior, attitude toward local churches.

Bowers was greatly influenced by the work of Linus Morris, giving Christian Associates International some positive publicity, inferring that the CAI approach to

¹⁷⁸ Bowers, “International Churches,” 161-170.

church planting is one that should be considered as a valid method.

Christian Associates International takes a different approach to church planting. After recruiting high-impact leaders, they form a church-planting team made up of people with various gifts and abilities for ministry. They include people on the team who have preaching and teaching skills, organization skills, and music and worship skills. With their emphasis on cell group ministry, they seek to build a number of small groups before launching out with large group gatherings and worship.¹⁷⁹

In the “Summary and Conclusion” chapter of Bowers’ dissertation, he writes,

“While the primary target of international church (IC) outreach is the expatriate community, it would be a mistake to overlook the potential of IC’s to reach out to the indigenous people and to be involved in planting national churches.”¹⁸⁰ Yet, Bowers readily admits that North American missionaries, mission boards, and even international churches themselves do not realize this potential, and as a result, this aspect of church-planting and international churches is untapped.¹⁸¹ Bowers continues this argument, stating, “This suggests that international churches may represent a largely unused base of operation for missions to unreached peoples in the strategic urban centers of the world.”¹⁸² Bowers then pulls from an article in *Christianity Today* written by Andy Fletcher, where Fletcher writes, “Some mission agencies have advised their overseas staff to avoid contact with the expatriate community, rightly wanting them to immerse themselves in the local language and culture, so that they can minister effectively to

¹⁷⁹ Bowers, “International Churches,” 182.

¹⁸⁰ Bowers, “International Churches,” 188.

¹⁸¹ Bowers, “International Churches,” 188.

¹⁸² Bowers, “International Churches,” 190.

nationals.”¹⁸³

Included in Bowers’ closing remarks is his understanding that, along with helping international churches recruit pastors, there is also a need to equip these pastors for this unique ministry. At the time of the writing of Bowers’ dissertation, Bowers knew of no institution that was offering courses geared to international church ministry.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, this is a concern, but a glimmer of hope exists in that the researcher knows of one evangelical seminary that is in the process of considering some type of class or internship that would be geared directly to international church work.

Bowers’ dissertation is a gold mine for any who want information on international church work. It should be studied in its entirety by all who are involved with international church work or who are going into this type of work. It is also a good resource for all mission agencies so that they can enlarge their own ideas of how to reach indigenous peoples.

“Exploring the Missional Potential of International Churches:
A Case Study of Capital City Baptist Church, Mexico City”¹⁸⁵

Ernest Klassen begins his abstract, stating, “The purpose of this research has been to explore the ways that international churches should cultivate a missional identity that more fully embraces the indigenous peoples of the host country where

¹⁸³ Bowers, “International Churches,” 192.

¹⁸⁴ Bowers, “International Churches,” 194.

¹⁸⁵ Ernest Eugene Klassen, “Exploring the Missional Potential of International Churches: A Case Study of Capital City Baptist Church, Mexico City” (D.Min. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2006).

these churches are located without compromising the ministry to the expatriate community.”¹⁸⁶ At the beginning of chapter one of his dissertation, Klassen restates his purpose, but in a slightly different manner: “This dissertation is about international churches and their particular contribution to fulfilling the great commission, especially among the unreached people groups of the world.”¹⁸⁷ Both of these phrases appealed to the researcher as they are very similar to the wishes and goals of the researcher. Later in the same chapter, Klassen reveals he had been asked a question by the vice-president of international ministries of the U.S. Alliance (Christian and Missionary Alliance), Dr. Robert Fetherlin, that was the guiding force behind his own research. This question was, “How can international churches be used to bridge into the local culture to see healthy churches planted?”¹⁸⁸ This researcher is also attempting to answer this question because of the great need that still needs to be met if we are going to fulfill the Great Commission.

Klassen begins by giving the definition of an international church he used for his research. “An international church is a multicultural local fellowship of expatriate and national people who are united in Christian belief and who speak a language distinct from the majority in the host country.”¹⁸⁹ Klassen’s inclusion of the word “multicultural” seems to emphasize that international churches should be multicultural, meaning that one particular culture does not have exclusive control over the church. While

¹⁸⁶ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” Abstract.

¹⁸⁷ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 1.

¹⁸⁸ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 3.

¹⁸⁹ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 1.

international churches should have the goal of being a multicultural church, it does not mean every multicultural church should be considered an international church. For instance, many cultures can exist in the same country and these people could all have the same nationality. If they all attend the same church, this would be a multicultural church, only because the majority of the attendees would not be out of their passport country.

Klassen uses the second chapter of his dissertation to explain what different authors have already said about the issues around international churches, a sort of literature review mixed in with some of his own findings from the surveys he gave to international pastors. One issue is the *lingua franca* of the day. Klassen argues that just as Greek was the *lingua franca* at the time of Christ, and Greek was instrumental in the spread of the Gospel, “English could be considered a road that facilitates the spread of the gospel.”¹⁹⁰ This continues the argument of the importance of international churches and English as their main language.

Included in this chapter are multiple discussions on what it means to be “missional,” and what it means when an international church is missional. As the title of his dissertation indicates, Klassen argues extensively that international churches must be missional in their outlook, and churches must intentionally become missional. They must do things that maybe aren’t necessarily self-evident to some. Klassen shares from Eddie Gibbs that missional is “the essential nature and vocation of the Church which is composed of God’s called and sent people. It is the continual process of critical

¹⁹⁰ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 47.

contextualization. The missional church recognizes the dynamic interplay of church, gospel, and society.”¹⁹¹ Klassen continues by giving a resume of some main points by Gibbs in regard to what is a missional church:

Missional communities intentionally live among and listen to their culture, ever re-determining how the message of the kingdom will connect....
Missional communities reinvest their energies in going into the culture and (re) good-newsing it (sic), and itself, in attractive ways that make sense....
Faithful missional communities intentionally create links that hold disciples together in mission, and that vitally connect outsiders with Christ’s people and mission.¹⁹²

Klassen continues his discussion on “missional churches,” stating, “International churches can be catalysts for global mission’s mobilization by reaching influencers living in the host nation. Assisting the development of churches within and outside the host culture and equipping expatriates returning to their home nations or being redeployed to other countries is another way the IC can be a catalyst.”¹⁹³

Even though Klassen advocates that international churches be missional in their outreach, he is transparent in showing that not all international church pastors agree with his position. Klassen conducted surveys with 36 international pastors, and eight of them stated it would be “not important” to have outreach to nationals.¹⁹⁴ Klassen clarifies that some of these international pastors were serving in places where proselytizing is illegal, though he does not state if all eight of these pastors were dealing with that situation.

¹⁹¹ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 46.

¹⁹² Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 47.

¹⁹³ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 48.

¹⁹⁴ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 50.

Klassen lays out his research in chapter three of his dissertation. His research is set around “Capital City Baptist Church” in Mexico City, which he presents as a case study for his dissertation. The hypothesis presented “states that international churches can play a unique role in penetrating into and reaching the unreached people groups of the world without compromising their responsibility to minister to and evangelize the expatriate community.”¹⁹⁵ After presenting an in-depth study of Capital City Baptist Church, Klassen uses the information he gleaned from surveys taken from 36 international churches to confirm the validity of his hypothesis, especially concerning Capital City Baptist Church. Klassen shares that he contacted the current director, Dr. Warren Reeve, of the “Missional International Church Network” who became an advisor to Klassen on his research, and he received a directory of the network from which he contacted the 36 international churches. The degree of affiliation of each church to the Missional International Church Network is not known.

Klassen also shares that he adapted the survey given by Dan Bowers in Bowers’ own research. Klassen states that his purpose in “using this tool with adaptations is that I hoped to build upon Dr. Bowers’ research, either confirming his findings or complementing them.”¹⁹⁶ Klassen’s goal was to strengthen the argument that international churches must reach the national peoples around them. It is worth noting that both Klassen and Bowers had major case studies of individual international churches from Latin America, which guided their research; Klassen from Mexico City,

¹⁹⁵ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 71.

¹⁹⁶ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 76.

and Bowers from Caracas, Venezuela.

Chapter four of Klassen's dissertation provides the results of his research. In the second paragraph of this chapter, Klassen gives the resume of his findings.

Although the primary focus of the international church (IC) should always be on the expatriate, its focus should not be exclusively there. By reaching out to English speaking nationals and even impacting the non-English speaking national, the IC can broaden its sphere of influence, reaching into important unreached sectors of many world-class cities, thus contributing significantly to the biblical mandate to reach the unreached (Rom. 15:20).¹⁹⁷

This confirms what both Klassen and Bowers suggested and adds credence to the hypothesis of this current thesis-project.

However, it is intriguing to note that of the 36 international churches surveyed, only four of them (11%) "explicitly expressed any degree of missionality towards the indigenous people in their mission or purpose statement."¹⁹⁸ It should be obvious that a mission or purpose statement without any missional wording does not mean the church is not missional. Yet, having a mission or purpose statement that expressly mentions that they are missional in their purpose does encourage active missionality.

Klassen points out that the pastor is the largest factor in determining the amount of missionality. He writes, "The senior pastor is the most significant human factor in determining the missional nature of the church."¹⁹⁹ Klassen states that a pastor can influence a church's missional outlook by, "his preaching, his attitude toward nationals, his personal friendship, his cultural sensitivity, his use of the Scriptures, his vision, his

¹⁹⁷ Klassen, "Missional Potential," 79.

¹⁹⁸ Klassen, "Missional Potential," 82.

¹⁹⁹ Klassen, "Missional Potential," 93.

lack of dogmatism, or simply his persona.”²⁰⁰

Klassen continues, showing the importance of the international pastor and the other church leaders of being well-adapted to the local culture. Klassen states, “The more proficient the leadership is in the language and in the culture, the more potential there is for the IC to be missional.”²⁰¹ This may be the largest determining factor in whether or not an international church is missional in its local outreach.

Klassen makes an intriguing, and disturbing, point, mentioning that he discovered (or uncovered) one of the most damaging characteristics that hinder an international church from becoming missional is American prejudice toward the local people. In Klassen’s case study of the Capital City Baptist Church in Mexico City, this was expressed by some of the survey respondents who mentioned the attitudes of Americans toward the local Mexicans. Klassen reported that some Americans at CCBC in Mexico City expressed, “Mexicans corrupt the atmosphere of an international church, and preferably they should not attend.”²⁰² Klassen furthers this argument by reporting that one Mexican stated, “The age of ‘white supremacy’ is fast coming to an end and they should shed their prejudice,”²⁰³ the “they” referring to Americans.

This is a prime example of what David Pederson refers to in his book, which was reviewed earlier in this chapter. Pederson references tensions that exist in international churches. In regard to the point that is being mentioned by Klassen, this is what

²⁰⁰ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 93.

²⁰¹ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 94.

²⁰² Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 119.

²⁰³ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 120.

Pederson specifically calls a mission tension, in which a choice must be made by the church to situate the culture of their church between being an “oasis” or a “launching pad.”²⁰⁴

This issue is especially important for the researcher and most of the people who will be reading and studying this dissertation, as for the most part, we are Americans. Klassen points out that some people greatly enjoy hearing about America, but others rightly see that as being culturally insensitive to the local culture. At the same time, an international church is by definition, a church where more than 50 percent of the people come from outside the local culture. So, if a church focuses so much on the local culture, the international aspect of the church can become diminished, and the church could become a straight multicultural church. This is not bad, but it does limit some possibilities of reaching expatriates and other English-speaking peoples.

Klassen confirms that the key to this tension is found in the leadership of the church. “The leadership should be fully committed to serving the expatriates well and also be fully committed to the missional project. There needs to be an agreement on the dual purpose and not any type of competition between the two branches of the church.”²⁰⁵

Klassen uses chapter five of his dissertation to give his summary and conclusion. He points out that his studies show the importance of the head pastor for an international church. The international church pastor must watch his preaching and

²⁰⁴ Pederson, *Expatriate Ministry*, 46.

²⁰⁵ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 122.

illustrations, must not promote his own nationality too much, must have a warm personality, and must be culturally sensitive. Klassen states, “The most significant and determining factor affecting the degree and pace of missionality in the international church is the pastor.”²⁰⁶

Klassen shares that he discovered from his research that certain qualities of an international church make it attractive to local people. These qualities include “the denominational issue, the American culture, the English language, disillusionment with the local national church, and the international church as a halfway house.”²⁰⁷

Klassen’s reference to a halfway house is a place “where nominal disillusioned Catholics can discover a revitalized faith.”²⁰⁸ Klassen’s reasoning behind this is that the style of worship in many international churches is “closer liturgically, doctrinally, and socially to the Catholic church than to some evangelical churches.”²⁰⁹ Klassen suggests that international churches should use this characteristic to attract the upper-class people of the local population.

Later, Klassen begins a discussion on obstacles of which an international church must be aware if it desires to be missional in their outreach. Klassen says the largest obstacle is a philosophical one, and according to this researcher, it is basically the same one that Pederson called the “mission tension.” Klassen shares, “Some people believe very strongly that the international church exists exclusively for the expatriate

²⁰⁶ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 136.

²⁰⁷ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 137.

²⁰⁸ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 141.

²⁰⁹ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 141.

community, not for the national community, and any endeavor to reach nationals is detrimental to and compromises the ministry to the expatriate community.”²¹⁰ Klassen continues, providing arguments for and against an international church being a missional church. He refers to this as an international church having either an exclusive or an inclusive view. It is interesting to note that Klassen presents an extensive discussion on the merits of both views. However, he only gives scriptural backing to the inclusive viewpoint. This shows some bias in Klassen’s reasoning, though this researcher personally agrees with what Klassen presents, that an international church should be inclusive in outreach to nationals.

Klassen does not stop with the above position, however. He suggests an international church can be both exclusive and inclusive at the same time. Klassen points out that both Bowers and Pederson, in their research, came to that point of view. Klassen says that an international church can be “both an oasis for expatriates and a launching pad to the indigenous people.”²¹¹ Klassen shares that “an effective missional international church is to be monolingualistic (sic) but multicultural.”²¹² He states that an expatriate who can worship in his own language (English) will feel that he is in an oasis. This emphasis on the English language will end up attracting nationals who already know English. So, both the exclusive and inclusive views are met simultaneously. Klassen ends by sharing some suggestions he believes to be important for those

²¹⁰ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 143.

²¹¹ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 147.

²¹² Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 147.

interested in international church work. His first suggestion is “that international churches reflect on and articulate clearly, in writing, their reason for existence.”²¹³ By having a purpose/mission statement, members of the church will know what the outlook is for the church, and they will not be surprised about the target for future outreach events. This researcher will attempt to gather mission statements from international churches to see how many actually have a mission statement, and if their statement clarifies if they are more of an oasis or a launching pad church.

Klassen provides a summary of his research findings that are worthwhile:

- The IC is strategically located to influence the unreached in many countries where national churches are illegal.
- Unreached people exist among the upper and middle classes of all of the world-class cities that, because of their interest in English and openness to the North American culture, are within reach of the IC.
- Millions of English-speaking nationals are within the sphere of influence of the IC.
- Learning and perfecting English is so highly valued that the IC could be seen as a place to learn.
- Many expatriates associated with the IC have natural bridges to the English-speaking nationals. McGavran’s emphasis on the bridges of God, supernatural networks along which the gospel spreads (27-35), was powerfully reinforced when I linked the stories of several of my participants and noted their natural interconnectedness. As my research indicated, this interconnectedness transcends culture.
- Many expatriates who are already bilingual and culturally adept represent a pool of potential missionary candidates without necessarily leaving their secular vocations.
- The assimilation of nationals and expatriates has potential for demonstrating the unity of the Spirit and modeling the transnational impact of the gospel.
- Missional IC can enrich the life of the expatriate and national through mutual contact.
- ICs minister to missionaries who minister to the nationals.
- Missional ICs will be a blessing to the national churches, serving them and enriching them.
- Missional ICs affect nationals by providing strategic care, training, and

²¹³ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 151.

resources for Christian workers who, in turn, serve the nationals.

- Missional ICs can be instrumental in planting indigenous and unique English speaking national churches with a cultural and linguistic blend that addresses a particular niche, which will plant national churches.²¹⁴

After presenting his findings and his conclusion, Klassen includes over a dozen appendices that are worth the time to study. These include copies of the surveys he used and the responses gathered from the pastors he interviewed, and the different information collected from the international churches that were surveyed.

“Pastoring A Parade: International Church Ministry”²¹⁵

Jack Wald presents a study of international churches, specifically reporting from what he learned during his time in Morocco at Rabat International Church. Wald has written a book called *A Guide to International Church Ministry: Pastoring A Parade*, published in 2016 and reviewed earlier in this chapter. Wald’s research project was to put together material for his book and his dissertation basically contains said book, appearing in the appendix of his dissertation.

However, some slight differences exist between Wald’s dissertation and his book. The first is that his dissertation includes a chapter on “Methodology.” In this chapter, Wald shares how he conducted his research. He states that from his time as being pastor of the Rabat International Church, he saw the possibilities of international church ministry and he wanted to see a manual published that could be used as a guide

²¹⁴ Klassen, “Missional Potential,” 154.

²¹⁵ Jack Wald, “Pastoring a Parade: International Church Ministry” (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2015).

for such a ministry. Wald shares that he began his research by listing what makes international churches distinct from regular churches. As he began to list his data, he put together an outline which became the outline for the material of his manual, the *Guide to International Church Ministry*.

After assembling the material for the *Guide to International Church Ministry*, Wald desired to distribute this to other international pastors to see if it was a help in their ministries. He sent it to 23 international church pastors, of whom 19 gave him feedback. Wald's dissertation reported on whether the guide was indeed a help to these international pastors. The response was positive and the result was the publication of the guide in a book format.

It is interesting to note the timeline of Wald's work, though this does not have any effect on the validity of his work. Wald states that he put together his guide in 2013. He distributed his guide for feedback and research in 2013 and 2014. Wald was granted his doctorate degree in 2015 from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, and he published his book in 2016. This timeline was impressive, showing a real commitment to academic scholarship and getting things done.

Wald's dissertation also included a "Selected Bibliography." Wald includes many works that deal with some aspect of church ministry, though not specifically about international church ministry. Wald also lists reference sections dealing with ministry with Muslims and other works in Morocco.

This researcher is not going to write more on this dissertation as the main points were given in the above review of Wald's book. If one desires to study international

church ministry for academic purposes, perusal of Wald's dissertation will be beneficial. If one desires to minister in an international church, he should skip the dissertation and read his worthwhile book.

Articles

"Teaching English Feeds a Worldwide Craving"²¹⁶

In this article, Bradley Baurain provides a brilliant argument on the importance of English for spreading the Gospel message. Baurain begins by making a statement derived from a book written by Susan Griffith called, *Teaching English Abroad: Talk Your Way Around the World*, written in 1991. Baurain states, "During the 1980s and even more so since 1989, English has without a doubt become the premier language for world politics, business, education, science and technology, and other areas."²¹⁷ Baurain continues this thought, declaring that English "is now an unofficial but all-pervasive common tongue for anyone crossing international boundary lines."²¹⁸ Baurain wrote his article in 1992, which makes some of this material a bit dated, but much is still relevant. In fact, with what we have seen happen around the world since that time, English has become even more important.

Baurain talks extensively about the Teaching English as a Foreign Language

²¹⁶ Bradley Baurain, "Teaching English Feeds a Worldwide Craving," *EMQ Online*, accessed March 27, 2015, <https://emqonline.com/print/1391>.

²¹⁷ Baurain, "Teaching English," 1.

²¹⁸ Baurain, "Teaching English," 1.

(TEFL) program, mentioning two geographic areas where the program has worked well, China and Eastern Europe. He also mentions several organizations that provide teachers for TEFL, such as Greater Europe Mission and International Teams.

Baurain does not discuss the possibility of using English teaching in International Churches. In fact, he does not mention any sort of church. It is the researcher's opinion that having a TEFL program could be a great way for International Churches to have a pertinent outreach into their local community. It could be accomplished in most areas of the world. Baurain does offer some helpful guidelines for running a good program, and this advice could also help any international church.

"Tales of a Trailing Spouse"²¹⁹

Jeri Bidinger's short article presents the many opportunities available to anyone who finds themselves following their spouse to an overseas location for their work. Bidinger states that unfortunately, in the past, many missionaries and international church workers did not regard the trailing spouse as valid contributors to their church. He hopes this article will help others to realize the value the "trailing spouse" can add to a given situation.

Bidinger gives examples as to some of the benefits that a "trailing spouse" can provide depending on their situation. Bidinger states that many "trailing spouses" can say, "We arrive well-funded and housed, with documents of legitimacy and time we

²¹⁹ Jeri Bidinger, "Tales of a Trailing Spouse," *EMQ Online*, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://emqonline.com/print/2561>.

aren't sure how we will use. We are well-educated. We have gifts, skills, and experience, both secular and sacred."²²⁰ When one has lived overseas, one realizes these benefits are not negligible.

Bidinger continues by saying that, in many cases, churches have waited too long before realizing "trailing spouses" could provide a benefit for their church. He states that churches typically like to wait for several years before asking people to become involved. Yet, in many cases, the time frame is for expats to be available is short because their contract is often for three to five years. Bidinger suggests, "The international church would be wise to dedicate primary staff attention to recognition and mobilization of those who come ready to serve."²²¹

The researcher understands the value of what a "trailing spouse" can provide to an international church in that a third of the congregation leaves every year, and one must find replacements for all areas of ministry. Of course, a church must be wise and have a screening process for all potential workers before distributing responsibilities.

"Globalization and the Missionary Potential of International Churches"²²²

Dan Bowers gives many highlights of his doctoral dissertation that are discussed in the above section on dissertations. Bowers' article is much shorter than his dissertation, and it provides a good resume of the findings of his dissertation. Bowers

²²⁰ Bidinger, "Tales of a Trailing Spouse," 2.

²²¹ Bidinger, "Tales of a Trailing Spouse," 5.

²²² Dan P. Bowers, "Globalization and the Missionary Potential of International Churches," *EMQ Online*, accessed March 27, 2015, <https://emqonline.com.print/1857>.

argues for international churches to be used by mission organizations to do evangelism and church planting among indigenous people, as well as providing the spiritual care needed by expatriates in that area. Bowers states that Pederson has declared, “The IC is not the only means for mission...but a vital key in world evangelization.”²²³ Bowers gives the example of Christian Associates, a mission organization which is purposefully planting international churches in Europe with the goal of reaching nationals through their worship and outreach.

Bowers mentions that international churches were originally started to provide for the spiritual needs of expatriate peoples who found themselves in a foreign country for one reason or another. Bowers continues by quoting David Pederson, who stated, there was a tension that developed in these churches between being an oasis for the expatriates and becoming a launching pad to reach indigenous peoples. Bowers calls this a “tension between isolating and integrating nationals.”²²⁴

Bowers adds another unique perspective on the use of English. He states Christians must be using English as a tool for evangelism because we (Christians) are not the only group that can provide English language classes. Bowers gives an example of an article that appeared in the *Muslim World League* magazine called, “Using English to Promote Islam.” Bowers shares that the authors in the article he read stated, “Since English has become the universal language, Muslims should seek to work in that

²²³ Bowers, “Globalization,” 4.

²²⁴ Bowers, “Globalization,” 2.

medium to help make converts to Islam.”²²⁵ This is not surprising, but it does show the importance of this natural tool that native English speakers must use for God’s glory.

“English-Speaking International Churches Seen as ‘Lighthouses’ for All Nations”²²⁶

Ken Camp states that international churches have the potential to become “spiritual lighthouses for all the nations.”²²⁷ He argues that international churches can attract people in foreign countries who normally would not consider going to a church in their homeland. This, Camp says, is because of people feeling homesick for something, and that they possibly see the international church as being closer to their home culture, both in terms of language and social activities.

Camp proceeds by giving a history of the founding of the “International Baptist Convention.” IBC began by the “initiative of twin brothers Herman and Herbert Stout” who, after WWII, helped to start children’s Sunday School classes for the children of US military personnel living in Germany.²²⁸ Both Herman and Herbert ministered in churches in Germany after finishing their military and seminary training, and they helped to establish a group of churches which eventually became the “International Baptist Convention.”

Camp mentions that it was not until the 1990s that the IBC churches became

²²⁵ Bowers, “Globalization,” 2.

²²⁶ Ken Camp, “English-Speaking International Churches Seen as ‘Lighthouses’ for All Nations,” *Baptist Standard*, posted September 10, 2008, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/world/8499-english-speaking-inte>.

²²⁷ Camp, “English-Speaking International Churches,” 1.

²²⁸ Camp, “English-Speaking International Churches,” 2.

truly international in flavor. Because of American military restructuring in Europe (pulling many troops back to the USA), many churches realized they needed to expand their outreach to more than US military personnel, and hence these churches became international in scope as they directly focused on the use of English for attracting all speakers of English to their churches.

Today, the IBC group of churches number “63 churches in 25 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas.”²²⁹

“The Growing International Church Movement”²³⁰

“With estimates of fifteen million Americans living abroad, the overseas English-language church movement today is a growing enterprise, with some estimates of up to one thousand churches overseas.”²³¹ This is the opening sentence in Kenneth MacHarg’s article, “The Growing International Church Movement.” It shows that the international churches are not unusual, and there are, in fact, an increasing number of them around the world and that they need to be taken seriously. There are also some changes in how international churches are doing their ministry. MacHarg mentions several of these and their results.

Today, international churches are likely to be “evangelical” in their understanding and scope of the Gospel. They are multidenominational, not coming

²²⁹ International Baptist Churches, accessed June 20, 2017, <http://ibc-churches.org/>.

²³⁰ Kenneth D. MacHarg, “The Growing International Church Movement,” accessed June 20, 2017, <http://micn.org/the-growing-international-church-movement/>.

²³¹ MacHarg, “Growing International Church Movement,” 1.

from one group of churches. They are truly international in their membership and outreach, no longer focused solely upon either American or English nationals. English is the common language used because it is widely understood and spoken, not because of American or British national influence. Finally, MacHarg states that international churches are more missional in their ministry than they used to be, reaching out into their local culture.²³²

MacHarg continues by sharing from David Pederson's work that he sees "the two-thirds world will increasingly assume leadership of the International Churches."²³³

"Expatriate Churches: Mission and Challenges"²³⁴

Thornsten Prill discusses churches that are targeting expatriate groups. This is not an article about international churches, though there are a few similarities. Prill seems to advocate for what he refers to as having a "church within a church." In this model, Prill says, "Expatriate Christians become part of an indigenous church and form a kind of church within a church."²³⁵ Prill gives an example of an Anglican church in the United Arab Emirates which has German, Tamil, Korean, and Afrikaans congregations.

Prill says these congregations develop because of linguistic reasons, namely,

²³² MacHarg, "Growing International Church Movement," 3.

²³³ MacHarg, "Growing International Church Movement," 3.

²³⁴ Thornsten Prill, "Expatriate Churches: Mission and Challenges," *EMQ Online*, accessed March 27, 2015, <https://emqonline.com/print/2348>.

²³⁵ Prill, "Expatriate Churches," 4.

being able to have worship and Christian fellowship in one's mother tongue. The difference between these expatriate congregations and international churches is the use of the mother language, not just English, and the groups not mixing with each other.

Prill offers another example of this type of a church found in Nottingham, England, which has 15 nationalities in attendance. Of these 15, three of them have Bible studies in their own language: Chinese, Persian, and Spanish. One of these also has their own worship service: Persian. In essence, what Prill describes here is very similar to an international church, especially since English is their main language, in this case, because the church is actually in England. Perhaps, Prill has not considered the definition of multicultural churches in relation to his work on expatriate congregations, and perhaps, that might be a better qualification of this church.

The researcher agrees that, if possible, it is preferable to worship and fellowship in one's mother tongue. However, when one is based in a foreign country, there may not be enough people who speak one's mother tongue, and then one needs to make do with what is available. To have congregations within a main congregation is not a bad solution.

"Metaphorically Speaking: The Joys of an International Network"²³⁶

Inneke Riddell, a pseudonym, wrote this article to explain the importance of networking when you are in a place where you are in the minority. In Riddell's case,

²³⁶ Inneke G. Riddell, "Metaphorically Speaking: The Joys of an International Network," *EMQ Online*, accessed March 27, 2015, <https://emqonline.com/print/24343>.

they lived in a Muslim community in Asia, hence the need to not be publicly known.

This article provides good reasons to network with other people, showing how ministry can be furthered by this means. However, the author does not specifically talk about international church ministry. He does mention Greg Livingstone, and states that when planting churches in Muslim areas, this should not be done alone, but with a network of people. The author does not mention networking regarding international church planting, but the principles mentioned can be appropriate to that situation.

“The Expatriate Church: Possibilities and Potential”²³⁷

Dan Schmidt’s article is a short article on the importance of considering expatriates for what they can offer to an international church. Schmidt brings out that many expatriates can be found around the world in a multitude of jobs, from those who work with Microsoft to Home Depot to foreign-based missionaries. He states, “One of the key elements in ministry to expatriates is the international church.”²³⁸

Schmidt says that international churches can benefit from expatriates, but that expatriates can also benefit from the international church. He suggests “local expatriates,”²³⁹ meaning those who have been long-term expatriates, can provide stability to the international church because of the fluidity of membership in international churches. Local, long-term expatriates also know the local customs and

²³⁷ Dan Schmidt, “The Expatriate Church: Possibilities and Potential,” *EMQ Online*, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://emqonline.com/print/1506>.

²³⁸ Schmidt, “Expatriate Church,” 2.

²³⁹ Schmidt, “Expatriate Church,” 4.

cultures better than recently arrived expatriates. At the same time, the international church can provide programs for all ages and can provide a sort of member care for the new expatriates.

Schmidt mentions a need that international churches have for a better network between them. It is suggested that international churches could work together to provide seminars on certain subjects, or to conduct joint retreats. It is also proposed that international churches “can inform one another of migrations, and help to pave the way for current congregants moving to new areas.”²⁴⁰ This is an area that the researcher’s group, The International Christian Community of Eurasia, is promoting amongst its members.

“Meeting the Spiritual Needs of the U.S. Minority Overseas”²⁴¹

Ronald Smeenge attempts to promote outreach to Americans who are living outside the USA. Smeenge does a good job with his arguments, stating that international churches should be more aware of the positive influence that American expatriates can provide.

Smeenge gives several ideas as to what groups should do to attract American expatriates. “Advertise the church services in hotels, restaurants, corporation bulletin boards, embassies and supermarkets.”²⁴² They should also “co-operate with

²⁴⁰ Schmidt, “Expatriate Church,” 3.

²⁴¹ Ronald C. Smeenge, “Meeting the Spiritual Needs of the U.S. Minority Overseas,” *EMQ Online*, accessed March 27, 2015, <https://emqonline.com/print/1217>.

²⁴² Smeenge, “Meeting Spiritual Needs,” 3.

organizations like Christian Women's Club, Christian Businessmen's Club or International Christian Leadership” as these organizations often have visiting leaders who could share in your meeting.²⁴³ He also suggests that advertising a phone number, and letting people know that they can call at any time, can be beneficial for reaching this group.

Smeenge does not reference cultures other than Americans who are overseas, but the principles he shares in his article are valid for other cultures, too, and the researcher feels that an international church could benefit from Smeenge’s teachings.

²⁴³ Smeenge, “Meeting Spiritual Needs,” 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Problems to Consider and Questions to Answer

How to Start

I am convinced that international, English-speaking, evangelical churches in Europe have an important place in helping to fulfill the Great Commission for our time. These churches are not the only means to fulfill the Great Commission, nor are they the most important way to fulfill the Great Commission. Yet, because of their uniqueness, they need to be given a proper place in the religious landscape of each European country, especially in the major European cities.

International churches can assist local churches in their areas. With English as their main means of communication, it is a natural fit for working with those who are immigrating into the area, thereby helping to accomplish the biblical demand to take care of the foreigner, or stranger, in our midst.¹ These same biblical teachings include the care of widows, orphans, and the poor. While an international church may not be better placed than a local church to help these groups of people, there is no reason that they cannot help them.

If the goal is to show the place of international churches in today's religious

¹ The biblical teachings for how to properly treat the foreigners (also known as immigrants, strangers, outsiders) are many, including Deuteronomy 24:17, Leviticus 25:35, Zechariah 7:10, and Malachi 3:5.

layout, a professionally implemented research project can help meet this goal. If a research project is to be useful to a wide variety of people, it must utilize the best possible procedures. In *Writing Up Qualitative Research*, Harry F. Wolcott uses the analogy of working with a wheelbarrow as to how one should properly report their research:

Fieldwork and organizing one's data might be likened to collecting and identifying the "parts" of a wheelbarrow. Once you have gathered all the parts, you need a basis for sorting them and a workable sequence for assembling them. Think how you will proceed. Do you have everything you will need? Conversely, do you need everything you have? Remember, you're only supposed to be tightening that wheelbarrow, not filling it!²

A Doctor of Ministry research project emphasizes real world application. The goal is to provide a project other people can use, enabling them to go further in their own research. So, how does one go about designing an academic study that answers questions of interest? This chapter shows the thought process involved to plan, to prepare, and to carry out this research project.

Research Methodology

The place to start is to study the proper methods of doing research and to draw from these to design one's own study. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary has some helpful guides that have been put onto the web under their Semlink section. Dr. Brian Auday is the presenter of eight sessions that discuss proper methods one should follow

² Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research*, 3rd Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition, 2009) 93.

for a doctoral research project.³ In addition, he recommends two books I have chosen to use to help with my actual design and writing. These books are Colin Robson's *Real World Research* and Harry Wolcott's *Writing Up Qualitative Research*.

This thesis project title, "A Light to all Nations? Accessing the Missional Strength and Commitment of International Churches in Europe," describes who and what I am researching. Studying international churches for research projects leads to a project that is based more upon descriptive research than the other two traditional areas of research, exploratory and explanatory research. This descriptive research is a study of groups that are already in place, providing descriptions of phenomena already happening,⁴ and in this case, it is international churches in Europe. Yet, the very nature of studying groups where humans interact and create their own systems means that exploratory research is included because of the possibility of discovering new insights. Some explanatory research appears to discuss why some differences might exist in the results.⁵

Will these differences be based upon the number of cultures represented in each church, the host country's own culture, or the pastor's country of origin? The many different possibilities emphasize why one must be cautious and careful as to how one goes about one's research.

³ Bryan Auday, "Semlink: Research Methodology," South Hamilton, MA: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2008.

⁴ Colin Robson, "Real World Research" 3rd Edition (West Sussex: Wiley, 2013), 524.

⁵ Auday, "Research Methodology: Lecture 1a."

The International Christian Community Eurasia

As mentioned earlier, because of involvement in the planting of an international church in the Lyon, France area, and because of a desire to see international churches started in other cities and countries, I became a member of a group of individuals who began the International Christian Community Eurasia (ICCE). One of the major discussions during board meetings of ICCE has centered on how to promote international church work. The idea behind promoting international church work was not to grow our association, but to show that international church work should be a viable method for helping to accomplish the “Great Commission” in major European cities and beyond.

As a board member of this group, known as the ICC Euro Team, I was able to share my plan to have a research project and my desire to see it focus on international churches. During one of the meetings, we began an in-depth discussion about possible research questions that could help focus my study. These questions, as stated at the time, are listed here:

- In your opinion what are some of the marks of a healthy, flourishing church?
Financial autonomy, stable leadership, attracting a cross-section of countries, having a positive impact on the local churches, preaching of the Word, sharing the sacraments, making disciples, how much structure is needed to be healthy
- What is it that draws people to your church?
- What are some of the most significant challenges you face in your church?
- What do you see as some of the most significant opportunities for the kingdom

in your community?

- How is the English language used in your church? Is your church bilingual? Do you translate your service into the local language?
- Is your international church culturally neutral?
- What have you found to be effective means for sharing the Gospel?
- How do you assess if an area needs an International church?
- What are some of the top spiritual growth needs of your congregation?
Marriage issues, syncretism, Biblical ignorance...
- What made you choose this church? English community, similar theology, comfortable style of worship, English language...
- How does leaving one's home country open one up to spiritual needs?
- As a pastor, how have you had to adapt theologically to your situation?

Some general demographic questions were formed to help us get an accurate grasp of the numbers and locations of these international churches. These questions included the following:

- Name and address of the pastor,
- Name, address, web page of the international churches,
- How many churches are financially independent?
- How many nations/languages are represented in your church?
- What is the percentage breakdown in your church of these three groups:

indigenous nationals, expatriates, immigrants?⁶

Further discussions on this subject centered on how to encourage international pastors to take time to answer the questions. It was decided that a prize drawing should take place where those who have answered the questions will be the ones from whom the winner of this drawing will be chosen. In order to make the prize appealing enough to create desire to respond, it was decided that the prize would be a new Apple iPad. The ICC Euro Team board even offered to pay for half of the iPad,⁷ which was not accepted to keep conflict of interest issues away from the research.

The Survey

As the research project began to come together, it became clear that the best means for accomplishing this project would be in the form of a questionnaire or survey. A benefit of this strategy is that it can gather the large amount of information needed in a relatively short amount of time. Questionnaires can also be written in such a way that the data gathered can be tabulated and given certain values, depending upon what is being gathered.

However, questionnaires have drawbacks that must be kept in mind. It may seem to be simple to design a survey, but this can be deceptive because in its simplicity one can come across many difficulties. There is no such thing as a survey that is 100

⁶ The International Christian Community Eurasia Board Minutes, Nice, France, February 2014.

⁷ The International Christian Community Eurasia Board Minutes, Nice, France, February 2014.

percent adequate.⁸ As the designer of the survey, one must be very careful that the questions are not biased. Often, the author of a questionnaire can influence how people answer their questions by how the questions are asked. In order to help doublecheck the survey's questions, I asked the ICC Euro team to go over my questions and to provide helpful feedback. The final version of my survey went through four different revisions.

Interviews

It became apparent as I further developed the questionnaire that the answers I would receive would be informational, but that they might miss some details that could be gathered through personal contact. To limit this possibility, I added another section to my project, that of some semi-informal interviews.

To get an adequate number of people willing to participate in the interviews, these participants were included in the drawing for the iPad.

Delivery

With the decision to use a questionnaire as the main tool for gathering information, and interviews to fill missing gaps, the next step was to determine how to deliver the questionnaire and how to conduct the interviews.

Given the target goal of my research project was European international churches, and given the electronic age, it seemed best to distribute the survey

⁸ Auday, "Research Methodology: Lecture 2."

electronically. Using an online company, such as SurveyMonkey, could make the retrieval of completed surveys easier and assist with the study of results.⁹

Another important area was to decide on the number of respondents necessary to produce valid and viable results. Following a discussion with Dr. Bill Prevet from Cambridge University in England, and affirmation by Dr. David Currie, co-chair for the Institutional Review Board for Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I concluded that I needed a minimum of 40 people to complete the survey and a minimum of 10 people to participate in interviews.

Institutional Review Board

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary whose purpose is to ensure ethical research practices. When one is doing research that involves collecting data from human sources, the researcher is required to get IRB approval before proceeding.

The opening paragraph of the IRB application states,

When data are collected from human participants—as opposed to conducting library research where data are gathered from books and periodicals, unique ethical considerations emerge. Given the importance we place on Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) thesis-projects that meet the highest level of ethical integrity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) has established an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of the IRB is to protect the welfare, rights, and privacy of research participants. To this end, this form provides guidance to GCTS students and faculty in reviewing protections of human participants. D. Min. students must complete this form and submit it along with their thesis-project proposal (Form I). The thesis project mentor, the Director of the D. Min. Program

⁹ <https://surveymonkey.com>.

and the IRB Chair will also need to review and sign this form.¹⁰

The four categories that are required for the IRB process are listed in the footnotes.¹¹

One of the reasons for going through the IRB process is ensure the proper completion of a consent form for the participants of one's research project. For my study on international churches, I prepared a four-page Word document specifically covering the purpose, the procedures, the risks, the benefits, the compensation, the confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation in this survey, the means of receiving answers to possible questions that introduces the research project, the explanation of how to proceed with the online tool "SurveyMonkey", and a general thanks for their time and help. This "Informed Consent Document" was used to explain how the project was going to be done, to discuss any possible danger to the participant's ministry or family life, to describe the remuneration to the participants in

¹⁰ Review of Protections of Human Participants, IRB application, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

¹¹ The Institutional Review Board requires answers for the following subject matters which are divided into four categories:

- Nature and Purpose: provide a description of the goals and the significance of the research project; describe the end goal that is envisioned for the study.
- Methods and Procedures: describe the methods and procedures that will be followed during the research project by giving attention to the possible questions that participants may have, explaining the order of events that will take place for the participants, giving an estimate of the total amount of time that one expects each participant to spend answering your questions, describing any possible risks that the participants may have as a result of participating in this research.
- Participant Population: provide a description of the target group that one wants to accomplish this research and explain how one will contact this target group, giving attention to how one will obtain oral or written consent for the use of their answers to the questions, and explaining if there will be any compensation for the participants.
- Anonymity and Confidentiality: describe how the anonymity of participants will be guarded, keeping confidential any responses that may be linked to specific locations and explaining how the completed results will kept in a secure area in perpetuity.

the form of a drawing for an iPad, and to make sure it was understood that, by submitting their answers on the survey, they were giving their tacit consent (meaning that they understood the purpose of the research project and agreed to these purposes¹²) to have their answers used in the completed research project. A copy of this document is attached as an appendix at the end of this report (see Appendix B).

SurveyMonkey

After deciding on an online survey, I needed to choose a company that met the needs. Many internet-based companies provide online surveys, such as “Online Survey,”¹³ “SurveyGizmo,”¹⁴ “Free Online Survey,”¹⁵ “Murvey online surveys,”¹⁶ “KwikSurveys,”¹⁷ “EmailMeForm,”¹⁸ “Qualtrics,”¹⁹ and “SurveyMonkey.”²⁰

I chose “SurveyMonkey” because of the numerous features that it provides. These features include having “15 question types including rating scales and multiple choice” that are already formatted, being able to “gather responses with one handy URL,” providing help to create reports and graphs easily from the results and to actually customize the reports for your own research study, keeping data safe and securely

¹² Robson, *“Real World Research,”* 214.

¹³ www.sogosurvey.com.

¹⁴ www.surveygizmo.com.

¹⁵ www.freeonlinesurveys.com.

¹⁶ www.murvey.com.

¹⁷ www.kwiksurveys.com.

¹⁸ www.emailmeform.com.

¹⁹ www.qualtrics.com.

²⁰ www.surveymonkey.com.

guarded with codes, and many others.²¹ “SurveyMonkey” calls itself “the world’s most popular online survey software” and boasts having over 15 million customers.²²

My goal was to design a survey which would give the best answers to the questions, without being a boring task that participants would never complete. “SurveyMonkey” offers a free survey, but that one is limited to only 10 questions. So, I chose the “Gold” package which has an unlimited number of questions that can be asked and an unlimited number of responses that can be given. The “Gold” package had other benefits that would make analyzing the results easier.

I chose a mixture of question types and mixed their order so that the survey would not be monotonous. I used three different types of questions to collect data: multiple choice, matrix (Likert scales), and open-ended. I settled on a total of 20 questions, though of those, two collected general demographic information. One question asked if the participant was willing to conduct a 30-minute Skype conversation with me, and one asked if they would like a PDF copy of my completed thesis. Of the 16 remaining questions, eight were open-ended questions. For these open-ended questions, “SurveyMonkey” offers “Text Analysis” that checks for recurring word patterns, though most of the answers to these questions will require personal reporting.

This survey was accessible through a link found near the end of the “Informed Consent Document.” The link was set in such a way that a cookie was placed on each computer that accessed the survey so that a single computer could complete only one

²¹ www.surveymonkey.com.

²² www.surveymonkey.com.

survey. The survey was meant to be taken completely online, and that was the only means by which responses were recorded. At the same time, if one wished, one could print a PDF version of the survey. A copy of a PDF version of the survey is found in Appendix C of this report. The individual questions are listed below.

The Survey Questions

Questions 1 and 2 acquired basic information from each participant. This information, taken by itself, did not provide any sort of danger to the respondent. Still, to guard the anonymity of the rest of the answers, these two questions had their responses coded so that any cross referencing of results only led to a coded response.

- 1. Please fill in your contact information in the following sections. (This information will not be used with your answers of the following questions, but it is important if your name is picked as the winner of the iPad.)**

Question 1 asked for personal contact information from each person. This information was not published, and each respondent was given a letter of the alphabet to serve as their contact information for public purposes. When the drawing took place for the winner of the iPad, the response from question 1 provided the means to contact the winner and to arrange details of shipment.

2. Please add the following contact information for your church. (This information will appear in the appendix of my thesis as a directory of international churches.)

Question 2 asked for contact information for each international church. The idea behind this question was to create a sort of directory of international churches in Europe. Because we are truly in an electronic age, I not only asked for typical things, but also asked for information such as an address for a web page and an email address for the churches.

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your international church?

- The majority of people in attendance are outside their passport country.
- One culture does not dominate your worship style.
- Use of “English” as your church’s main language.
- Being involved in the religious life (contact with other churches) of your community.
- Being involved in the cultural life of your community.
- Making people aware of prayer requests from everyone’s home country.
- Celebrating cultural events from every culture.

Using a Likert scale, question 3 was designed to find out how strongly each pastor felt about certain statements concerning international churches.

4. How important are the following reasons for people attending your church.

- The international flavor of having many cultures present.
- The feeling of being part of your particular church family.
- The style of worship.
- The use of English as your main language.
- The preaching quality of the pastor.
- The importance of worshipping with others from their home culture.
- There is no other option for people who don't speak the local language.
- Other (please specify)

Like the previous question, question 4 used a Likert scale. It was designed to find out how the people who attend international churches feel about certain issues. On this question, I also had the option for the participant to write in an answer under "other."

5. How many different nations are represented in your church? Can you please list them?

Question 5 was designed to check the level of how international a church really is. I also ask the participant to list the countries represented. I could have done this with a drop-down menu and had a multitude of countries listed, but I would run the danger of missing a nation. So, I preferred to just have the respondent list the countries that are represented in their church.

6. According to your opinion please rate how you see the following items in being a mark of a healthy church?

- Financial autonomy.**
- Stable leadership.**
- Having a structured church leadership with elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees, children's director, etc...**
- Leadership that represents your congregation's cultures.**
- A church that is growing in numbers.**
- The number of believers' baptisms (public confession of faith for pedobaptists).**
- The number of child dedications (infant baptisms).**
- The number of conversions.**
- Sharing the sacraments.**
- Having a large percentage of your people involved in weekly Bible studies.**
- Outreach activities into your local community.**
- Church members who are well adapted to their new culture.**
- Involvement of church leadership with the local ministerial meetings (pastors' fellowship).**

Questions 6 to 10 address the overall theme of church health. Question 6 uses the Likert scale to determine how strongly the respondents agree or disagree with certain issues pertaining to having a healthy church. There were 15 different subjects that participants were asked to rate as to their importance.

7. Would you classify your church as a healthy church?

Question 7 was a multiple-choice “Yes/No question. Participants were provided space to explain why they would say “No.” My thinking behind this question was that some issues that might classify a regular church as unhealthy in some areas may not classify an international church as unhealthy. This might especially be true with having a church lay leadership that proportionally portrays those in attendance.

8. What has happened with your church attendance during the following time periods?

- Today compared to ten years ago.
- Today compared to five years ago.
- Today compared to three years ago.
- Today compared to last year.

Question 8 is another question to check the health of a church by looking at the trends in church attendance during the last ten years. In general, one might assume a healthy church is a growing church.

9. What is your church’s current attendance and membership?

- Average attendance?
- Church membership?
- If you don’t keep track of membership, is there a reason?

Question 9 is closely related to the previous question. It simply asked their current average attendance and church membership. By getting these answers, I was better able to study the results of question 8 which dealt with percentages of increases or decreases in church attendance.

10. Please pick the response that is closest to your reality concerning church finances.

- The church pays my salary at ____%.
- The church pays my housing at ____%.
- The church pays my ministry expenses at ____%.

Question 10 still dealt with church health, but approached the issue based upon the churches' finances. The presumption was that a healthy church is also financially independent.

11. What are some of the most significant challenges you face in your church?

Question 11 was an open-ended question asking about what sort of significant challenges the respondent may have faced in their church. The choice of an open-ended question is because the possible responses can vary greatly, creating a need to provide the freedom for each person to respond as they deemed necessary.

12. The Bible places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of helping the widows, the orphans, the poor, the foreigners... How has your church been involved with accomplishing these teachings?

By asking how the respondents' churches have helped widows, orphans, the poor, and foreigners, this question clarified if a church was concerned with being a "refuge" for their members, or if they saw themselves as a "launching pad" into their local culture.

13. How many of these ways is the English language used in your church?

- It is the only language used.
- We use mostly English, but will periodically use another language in worship.
- Our sermons are translated into the local language.
- Our entire services are translated into the local language.
- Our service is in the local language and we translate into English.
- We offer English language classes as a church outreach.
- Other (please specify).

Question 13 asked about the ways that English is being used in each church. Because English is the international lingua-franca, it would stand to reason that international churches would have a built in means of outreach into their communities, but are they using it?

14. Please briefly describe your involvement with like-minded pastors (of international churches) for fellowship, mutual learning, and encouragement. Please name the group in which you are involved.

Question 14 attempted to discover if the international pastor has a support

group to which they turn for fellowship, mutual learning, and encouragement. If they were involved in this type of a group, I asked them to identify this group with the hope that I will be able to learn what other types of groups of international pastors exist today.

15. Please describe the accountability that you have with a supervisor or coach (this does not mean your local church board).

Question 15 asked about accountability to a supervisor or a coach that the international pastor may have. It was specified that this should not be a member of the local church board but someone who is basically neutral in terms of the pastor's ministry.

16. We often hear that if one wishes to fit in with their host culture, they must learn the local language. Do you believe this to be true and how are you doing learning the local language?

Question 16 continued to address an issue often tied to the emotional well-being of expats, that of the ability to speak the local language. I wanted to know if the participant already knew the local language, or if they were in the process of learning this language. There may be some respondents who say that they don't need to know the local language because of how well everyone speaks English.

17. Being involved in an international church also involves your spouse and your

children. What have you found to be the biggest challenges for your spouse and your children because of you being the pastor of an international church?

Question 17 asked about the emotional well-being of the spouse and children of the respondent. Just as the pastor of an international church is living in a foreign country and dealing with a different host culture, so too, the pastor's family must deal with these situations. What are the challenges that are specific to the pastor's spouse and children?

18. There are some people (pastors included) who believe that international churches should not exist, but that we should encourage all believers to attend local churches. If someone came to you as the pastor of an international church and asked you why your church existed, what would you give as a very short answer?

Question 18 was a test question to see if my overall premise is correct, regarding the validity of needing international churches. In this open-ended question, I hoped to get additional reasons as to why international churches should exist.

19. Thank you for taking the time to answer all of these questions! If you are willing to have a 30-minute Skype conversation with me to share some stories of your ministry, both good and bad (specifically related to questions 11 & 12), would you please indicate so below?

Question 19 was a request to see if the respondent would be willing to hold a 30-minute Skype conversation. These conversations were held in a semi-informal

interview format in which I had some general questions based upon questions 11 and 12 of the survey.

20. Would you like to receive a completed copy of this research project (in pdf format) when it is finished?

Question 20, the last question, was the only one asking if the respondent would like to receive a completed copy of this research project. I specified that this copy would be in pdf format, meaning I would distribute this through the respondents' email addresses.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

Survey Distribution Issues

The original distribution of the survey was accomplished by sending the “Informed Consent Document” via email. To facilitate the distribution process, leaders of the International Christian Community of Eurasia, also known as the Euro Team, personally sent the four-page “Informed Consent Document” to pastors and churches in their sphere of connections for international churches and pastors. The idea was to distribute the document which discussed the survey and its importance, and to explain that the iPad prize drawing from those who finished the survey would be determined at the ICC pastors and families retreat, which was scheduled for the end of October 2014. The hope was that those who received the survey would pass it along to others amongst their own contacts.

The initial release of the survey happened in July 2014. There were 17 people who filled out the survey in July, but then the responses stopped. After asking for more help, four more responses were completed by the beginning of October 2014. Because I stated in the survey introduction that an iPad would be awarded at the end of October, with no specific qualifications of how many respondents were necessary, the winner of

the iPad was determined from among the 21 respondents,¹ which was not a very good use of funds.

This led to another problem. For the survey to be considered valid and worthwhile, it needed at least 40 responses, which meant that I only had just over 50 percent of what was needed.

During March 2015, my wife was struck by a medical condition that turned our lives completely upside down. After a three-month stay at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, we had to determine where in the states we would live as our mission doctor had told us that we should remain stateside until my wife was able to function independently again. The following 18 months saw me making eight trips to Europe to continue my mission responsibilities. During this time, most of the work on my research project stopped.

By fall 2016, my spouse had improved sufficiently that we could plan our return to France, which we did in January 2017. At that time, I began my research once again. As I was contemplating the needs of more survey responses, I met an international pastor who was attending the ICC Pastors' Prayer retreat in Lyon, France. He happened to be the current head of the group AICEME, the Association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East. He suggested that I attend the upcoming AICEME retreat to get to know them and to try to get more survey responses at that time.

¹ The winner of the iPad was the pastor of Ecclesia International, an international church in Iasi, Romania. At his choice, he switched the prize to a computer Bible study program of the approximate same value.

In April 2017, I attended the AICEME retreat, which was split between Bratislava, Slovakia and Vienna, Austria. I was encouraged to discover this group and to see what it is that makes them unique. Yes, there are differences between ICC-Eurasia and AICEME, but there are also some major similarities. Sixteen more surveys were completed during this week.

Since April 2017, I continued to personally contact some pastors who had not yet filled out the survey and asked them to please do so. During the following four months, I received another 6 responses, bringing the total to 43, which surpassed the minimum suggested number of respondents.

SurveyMonkey was a good tool to use for distributing the survey. With today's widespread use of the internet, all that was needed to distribute the survey was an email address for each participant. Because of the length of time that passed from the first response to the last, one could suppose that there were other issues that surfaced that may have influenced the results.

As was mentioned, one of these issues was my wife's health. Nothing could be done about that. Another issue was that I personally did not know enough international pastors to whom I could send the survey. I initially thought the pastors who received the introductory letter, explaining the survey and announcing the iPad drawing, would forward the letter to other international pastors who would, in turn, do the same. This did not happen and was, in my opinion, the main reason for having so much time between the start and the end of collecting survey data.

The Survey

Question One

****1. Please fill in your contact information in the following sections. (This information will not be used with your answers of the following questions, but it is important if your name is picked as the winner of the iPad.)***

From question 1 on the survey, I could tell that of the 43 total responses, six were submitted by women and 37 by men. I did not stipulate that only the senior pastor could fill out the survey, so I cannot say how many of the respondents were from a senior pastor versus an assistant or other staff member. Still, it is safe to say that most of the respondents were senior pastors in that most of the churches were too small to have multiple staff members.

Question Two

****2. Please add the following contact information for your church. (This information will appear in the appendix of my thesis as a directory of international churches.)***

Upon quick analysis, it became evident that three international churches had two different people fill out the survey. In each of the three cases, the second person was a staff member, either an assistant or former senior pastor. This meant that I had

40 different churches who responded and not 43 which was the end total of number of surveys returned.

Upon further analysis, I discovered that two churches were not true international churches, but national, multi-cultural churches. One of these churches was from the USA and the other from France. Most of the people in these churches were nationals from that country. The definition of an international church that I had chosen for my research was that of the Lausanne Movement and this information was stated in the “Informed Consent Document.” This definition states that the majority of the people in attendance are from outside of their passport country. Therefore, even though both particular churches mentioned above had numerous cultures represented, they were still national churches per this definition. This meant that I needed to remove these sets of responses from the whole group, which SurveyMonkey makes easy to accomplish. Of the 40 remaining valid survey responses, I was now at 38 responses.

There was another response from a church that did not want to call itself an international church but took the survey because I asked it to do so. The church wanted to be known as a national church with a strong multi-cultural profile. The church wanted to be highly implicated in its society, and therefore relevant in its local setting, and did not want to be known as an “international” church with little local impact. Upon study of this church, both through personally attending a service and through their survey response, it was evident that this church did meet the requirements of an international church as set out by the Lausanne Movement. The researcher does wish to congratulate this church on realizing the importance of being relevant in their local

setting and truly wanting to impact their local society. They made the decision to focus their efforts on being more of a “launching pad” church than an international church known for being an “oasis” for their members.

Upon further examination of the responses, two responses were only partial responses. They completed the demographic information, but they did not respond to the open-ended questions that required more thought. I contacted the individuals from both churches and asked them if they could fill out the entire survey. They agreed to my request, but it meant that they had to start the survey over again and that I would then have two new responses that were actually doubles from earlier survey responses. By removing the partial responses, the total number of survey responses remained at 38.

Of the 38 complete responses, representing 38 international churches, three of them were contributed by women and 35 by men.

Question two showed that the 38 different churches were located in 19 different countries. France, with eight responses, was the country with the greatest representation. Germany was next with four churches. Belgium, Switzerland, Turkey, and the UK each had three churches represented. Sweden had two churches and all the other churches were the sole representative from their country. These countries included Austria, Bosnia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. These churches, along with their contact information, are listed in Appendix D at the end of the chapter. Included in Appendix D is one more church from France where the pastor is serving two churches, the first

being the one about which he completed the survey. As a result, there are 39 churches listed in Appendix D.

Questions 3-10: Survey Analysis Demographics

The responses from the three assistants or former pastors will be used when analyzing data that is not demographic in nature, such as the open-ended questions found in questions 11 and following. My reasoning is that two people from the same church may have a difference of opinion as to some of the challenges in their church or their family, but every question that reports the percentages of churches involved in some area is based upon 38, the actual number of churches who responded.

Question 3 begins a series of questions that use a method of analysis made possible by the Likert scale. The Likert scale allows the researcher to assign a weight to each answer. (See footnote on Likert scale below for greater explanation.)²

² Likert scales. Likert scales allow the researcher to assign importance to various responses on a survey. On a typical five-point Likert scale, on the far left is “strongly disagree” which has weight of one. On the far right is “strongly agree” and this has a weight of five. In the middle is a neutral response, which is neither disagree nor agree and this response is weighted at three. This leaves the following responses, “disagree” and “agree” with corresponding weighted scores of two and four. When one combines all the weighted responses the end score shows the influence of each factor compared to each other.

Having a weighted scale upon which one can evaluate importance makes the Likert scale ideal. The majority of the respondents’ answers determine the average scores. An average score of three indicates a neutral view and that most respondents don’t find this issue either important or not. An average of under two would be important in that it shows a majority of people disagreeing with a position. Likewise, an average of four or more would be important for showing a majority of people agreeing on a certain topic.

Question Three

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your international church?

- *The majority of people in attendance are outside their passport country.*
- *One culture does not dominate your worship style.*
- *Use of “English” as your church’s main language.*
- *Being involved in the religious life (contact with other churches) of your community.*
- *Being involved in the cultural life of your community.*
- *Making people aware of prayer requests from everyone’s home country.*
- *Celebrating cultural events from every culture.*

The following table shows the results from question 3:

Table 1. Importance of Differing Factors for an International Church

			Table 1			
	Str. Dis.	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str. Ag.	Weighted Response
<i>Outside passport country</i>	0	3	0	14	21	4.39
<i>One culture not dominate</i>	2	11	7	16	2	3.13
<i>English main language</i>	0	2	0	8	28	4.63
<i>Contact w other churches</i>	0	2	9	19	8	3.87
<i>Involved in community</i>	0	2	2	27	7	4.03
<i>Every country's prayer needs</i>	0	7	8	15	8	3.63
<i>Celebrating every culture</i>	0	12	10	12	4	3.21
<i>Importance of differing factors for an International Church</i>						

According to the weighted responses, three of the listed issues are important for an international church:

1. The majority of people are from outside of their passport country.
2. English is the main language used during the services.
3. The church is involved in the local community.

It is not surprising to see the majority of people being from outside of their passport country and that English is the main language used during their services. Both of these are found in most of the common definitions of international churches, which the respondents would have known.

A score of 4.03 for church involvement in the local community is a pleasant surprise. A tension exists in many international churches in this area, as has been reported in much of the literature dealing with international churches. The tension involves balancing how much a church should be an “oasis” for its people and how much it should be a “launching pad” for its members. This answer shows that respondents want their churches to focus on reaching into their neighborhoods. This is good!

It is also interesting to point out that the issue that came the closest to a neutral position is that of having one culture dominate the services. The weighted response to this issue was 3.13. One can only speculate as to the reasons, given that no explanation was requested. I believe a good guess here would be that many churches actually do have one culture that does dominate more than another culture in their services and therefore they do not want to state that having one culture dominate the service is wrong. In all probability, this is the American culture because it is generally true in international churches where Americans attend.

Question Four

4. How important are the following reasons for people attending your church.

- *The international flavor of having many cultures present.*
- *The feeling of being part of your particular church family.*
- *The style of worship.*
- *The use of English as your main language.*
- *The preaching quality of the pastor.*
- *The importance of worshipping with others from their home culture.*
- *There is no other option for people who don't speak the local language.*
- *Other (please specify)*

Question 4 differs from the preceding question in that this question asks why people attend an international church, not what the pastor believes is important in an international church.

This question also uses a Likert scale to readily ascertain the importance of these issues. The results appear in Table 2.

Table 2. Attracting Factors for International Churches

	Table 2					
	Str. Dis.	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str. Ag.	Weighted Response
Many cultures present	0	1	7	24	6	3.92
Feeling of church family	0	0	1	20	17	4.42
Style of worship	0	4	9	24	1	3.58
Use of English	1	2	1	16	18	4.26
Preaching quality	0	0	11	24	2	3.76
Culturally similar worshippers	0	7	14	14	2	3.3
No other viable option	11	10	8	4	5	2.53
Attracting Factors for International Churches						

Two important issues impact why people attend an international church. The first is the feeling of being a part of the church family, with a weighted score of 4.42. The second is the use of English in the services, with a weighted score of 4.26.

The feeling of being a part of a particular church family is not surprising in its importance. When believers move to a foreign country, they have the option of being a stranger in a local church or being one of the internationals in an international church. The international church is often the choice because people do not wish to be made to feel different. In the international church, most people are already different because they are from another country. This subtle nuance means the international church appears more welcoming to a foreigner than local churches.

Question Five

5. How many different nations are represented in your church? Can you please list them?

Generally speaking, the larger the church, the more nationalities are present. Several of the smaller churches, with about 20 in attendance, each had just under 10 nationalities represented. The larger churches each had over 50 nationalities represented; in fact, five churches had over 50 nationalities represented.

The survey asked respondents to list the different nations represented, and most respondents did so. However, several respondents stated there were too many nations to list so they did not complete this question.

Of the responses listed, through the text analysis of SurveyMonkey, the following countries were listed more than others: Ghana (12), South Korea (11), Netherlands (11), Mexico (10), Sweden (10), New Zealand (7), Sri Lanka (6). This list is surprising because the United States is not listed. After going through individual responses, I discovered the United States was actually listed more than any other country, but that people had written it in different ways; USA, United States, America, Americans, US, and more. It is not surprising that the USA was listed more than other nations because most pastors who responded to the survey were from the United States of America.

This problem occurred because I should have had a drop-down list of countries for respondents to choose from. This would have been more accurate. What is interesting to note in the top four responses though, is that four different continents were represented as well: Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. This truly shows the international aspect of the impact that international churches have.

Question Six

6. According to your opinion please rate how you see the following items in being a mark of a healthy church?

- Financial autonomy.

- Stable leadership.

- Having a structured church leadership with elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees, children's director, etc...

- *Leadership that represents your congregation's cultures.*
- *A church that is growing in numbers.*
- *The number of believers' baptisms (public confession of faith for pedobaptists).*
- *The number of child dedications (enfant baptisms).*
- *The number of conversions.*
- *Sharing the sacraments.*
- *Having a large percentage of your people involved in weekly Bible studies.*
- *Outreach activities into your local community.*
- *Church members who are well adapted to their new culture.*
- *Involvement of church leadership with the local ministerial meetings (pastors' fellowship).*
- *Solid, Biblical exegetical preaching.*
- *Solid, Biblical thematic preaching.*

Question six on the survey asked respondents about 15 factors that influence the church's health. They were asked to rank each factor, using the Likert scale, according to how much they agreed or disagreed with a specific factor as representative of their church's health.

As one studies the results in Table 3, it should be noted this question was written in such a way as to test positive influences on church health. Therefore, it is not surprising that no weighted answers have a value of two or less.

Table 3. Marks of a Healthy Church

			<i>Table 3</i>			
	<i>Str. Disag.</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Str. Agr.</i>	<i>Weighted Response</i>
<i>Financial autonomy</i>	0	2	8	23	5	3.82
<i>Stable Leadership</i>	0	0	1	24	13	4.32
<i>Structured Leaders</i>	0	4	8	19	7	3.76
<i>Represented Leaders</i>	0	1	8	21	8	3.95
<i>Growing #s</i>	0	5	14	15	4	3.47
<i>Baptisms</i>	1	4	9	19	5	3.61
<i>Child dedications</i>	1	7	17	10	2	3.14
<i>Conversions</i>	1	6	6	18	7	3.63
<i>Sacraments</i>	0	1	3	17	16	4.3
<i>Bible study involvement</i>	0	1	8	26	3	3.82
<i>Local outreach</i>	0	1	6	23	7	3.97
<i>Culturally adapted</i>	1	2	16	16	2	3.43
<i>Local ministerial</i>	0	3	8	25	2	3.68
<i>Exegetical preaching</i>	0	2	3	17	16	4.24
<i>Thematic preaching</i>	0	1	11	18	8	3.87
	<i>Marks of a Healthy International Church</i>					

Using the same qualifications, three influences are important for church health, each having a weighted value of four or above. They are stable leadership, sharing the sacraments, and exegetical preaching. Of these three, stable leadership was deemed the most important qualification of a healthy church, with a weighted response of 4.32. Right behind this was sharing the sacraments with a weighted response of 4.3, and this was followed by solid, exegetical preaching with a weighted response of 4.24.

Question Seven

7. Would you classify your church as a healthy church?

In contemplating the relationship between the size of church attendance and the provision of a salary and/or housing costs for the pastor (see question 10), one may wonder if the health of the church played into this equation. Question seven was a

simple question aiming to determine the health of a church according to their pastor.

Three respondents stated they felt their churches were unhealthy, whereas 34 said their churches were healthy. One said his church was both healthy and unhealthy at the same time. Of the four who said their churches were unhealthy, by cross-checking with question 10 (see Table Five), it was determined that three of these churches did not provide a salary for their pastor. Because of the small amount of data, one cannot simply say that if a church provides a salary for their pastor, the pastor is much more likely to think of their church as healthy, but that might appear to have some influence on this discussion.

Three of the four respondents stated the reason their church was unhealthy was because the leaders were not biblically qualified. The other respondent said their church was unhealthy because it was too much of an oasis and not enough as a launching pad, mentioning that there were a high number of missionaries in attendance.

Question Eight

8. What has happened with your church attendance during the following time periods?

- Today compared to ten years ago.***
- Today compared to five years ago.***
- Today compared to three years ago.***
- Today compared to last year.***

Question 8 also uses the Likert scale. However, the weighted response at the end of each line does not give much useful information, as it will simply show the overall likelihood of an increase or a decrease in the number of people in attendance during these time frames. Each church is unique with its own issues and as a result, the reasons for an increase or decrease in attendance cannot be transferred to any of the other churches. The question was written to determine the change in a church's attendance during four different time frames. Today, as compared to ten years ago, five years ago, three years ago, and lastly, this past year. What might prove interesting is to compare the results from this question with the questions about church health, salaries, and housing.

Table 4. Changes in Recent Church Attendance

				Table 4				
		<-----	Decrease	----->		<-----	Increase	----->
Today compared to	Didn't exist	(-)11% or more	(-)10-6%	(-)5-1%	Same	(+)1-5%	(+)6-10%	(+)11% or more
10 years ago	8	0	3	1	7	5	4	9
5 years ago	3	1	0	3	9	4	5	12
3 years ago	1	1	1	1	10	4	9	10
Last year	0	1	2	4	8	10	9	3
Changes in Recent Church Attendance								

Several items of interest can be pulled from this table. First, it appears one respondent did not complete this question because every line only contains a total of 37 responses. Looking through the individual responses, the reason for this omission, per the respondent's answer on the following question, appears to be the respondent was new to the church and did not have these details.

One fact evident in this table is the relatively young age of some of the churches. One church was started in the last three years, three did not exist five years ago, and eight did not exist ten years ago.

The remaining information confirms that most of the churches are growing. Last year, of these 37 churches, 22 churches grew, seven decreased in their size, and eight stayed the same. Three years ago, of the 36 existing churches, 23 grew in attendance, 3 decreased in attendance, and 10 remained the same. The figures from five years ago show that of the 34 existing churches, 21 increased in size, 4 became smaller, and nine stayed the same. Ten years ago, there were 29 churches, and of those, 18 have grown, four have decreased in size, and seven are still the same size. We could say that roughly three out every five responding churches have grown in their attendance, two out of every five stayed the same, and one out every five has become smaller over the time.

Question Nine

9. What is your church's current attendance and membership?

- Average attendance?

- Church membership?

- If you don't keep track of membership, is there a reason?

The next type of demographic data deals with the number of people in attendance at each church. The average attendance during Sunday services varied greatly. The two largest churches had an attendance of 600-800 people during their weekly services. The smallest churches had between 20 and 25. Nineteen churches had

an attendance of 100 or less, and fifteen churches had an attendance between 101 and 400 people.

Several of the respondents wrote an extra comment, stating their attendance varied greatly depending upon tourists and NATO soldiers being present. This data is displayed on Table Five.

Question Ten

10. Please pick the response that is closest to your reality concerning church finances.

- The church pays my salary at _____%.***
- The church pays my housing at _____%.***
- The church pays my ministry expenses at _____%.***

The purpose of question 10 was to see if the size of the church had any relationship to the church provision of a salary, housing costs, or ministry expenses. This data also appears on Table Five.

Approximately half of the churches indicated the pastor's salary and housing were paid by the church. Sixteen indicated they received no salary from their church, and 16 stated that their church paid their whole salary. The remaining respondents received a portion of their salary. The answers related to housing were very similar, except that 17 received no housing or rent, and 16 received their housing or rent. The intriguing aspect of this question is that the churches that paid the pastor's salary were not necessarily providing housing or rent for their pastor. Six churches provided a

complete salary, but no housing. Four churches did not pay any salary but provided housing. Only ten churches provided a complete salary and housing.

There does not seem to be a direct correlation between the size of a church and its provision of a salary. In general, larger churches are able to provide a complete salary more often. Yet, the largest churches said they either pay salary or housing, but not both, which leaves one wondering why. The responses also showed that one church of over 300 people in attendance, only provided a partial salary. The smallest church to provide a salary had 80 people in attendance, and not only did they provide a salary, they also provided housing and covered all the pastor's ministry expenses.

It is not possible to make any general statement about a correlation between attendance and providing salaries or housing. There must be other factors that were not asked about in the survey that influence whether a church provides a salary or housing costs.

Table Five shows a multitude of information regarding attendance, salary, housing, ministry expenses, health of the church, growth during previous year and importance of fiscal autonomy, all taken from the answers to questions 7, 8, 9 and 10. Having all this information on one table makes it possible to check for relationships between various factors.

A color-code system helped with the evaluation of the data. First, yellow highlighted cells indicate churches that paid a complete salary and housing costs. Churches deemed unhealthy were highlighted in red. Churches that dropped in attendance last year were highlighted in light blue. The orange highlighted cells show

two churches whose respondents did not agree that fiscal autonomy was important to a church's health. The light purple shows the smallest church that paid a complete salary and all housing costs. The reference numbers on the far left are for the author's benefit alone.

It is worth noting that of the four churches who called themselves unhealthy, three had increased attendance in the preceding year, and the other's attendance remained stable. Therefore, we cannot say that positive church growth will result in a healthy church.

It is interesting to note that the two churches who reported they disagreed that fiscal autonomy was important to church health, also showed a decrease in attendance and yet they described their churches as healthy. We also remark that neither church pays both a complete salary and/or housing. This shows that fiscal autonomy and ability to pay salary or rent are not the only indicators of church health. However, we see that 28 of the 38 respondents (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that fiscal autonomy was a good indicator of church health. Eight others had a neutral position on this issue. Generally speaking, one would conclude that fiscal autonomy is an indicator of church health, though it is not essential.

Table 5. Comparing Attendance Size, Percentage of Salary, Housing and Ministry Paid,
Healthy of Church, Recent Growth, and Fiscal Autonomy

Table 5							
Ref.	Attendance	Salary%	Housing%	Ministry%	Health	Growth	Fiscal Auto.
1	20	0	0	0	Y	Same	Agree
2	700	0	100	25	Y	Up	Agree
3	180	100	100	100	Y	Up	Strongly Agr
4	85-100	25	0	0	Y	Up	Strongly Agr
5	25	0	0	51-75	N	Up	Agree
6	75	25	0	76-99	Y	Down	Agree
7	260	25	100	26-50	Y	Up	Neutral
8	40	0	76-99	100	Y	Up	Agree
9	175	100	100	100	Y	Same	Agree
10	85	0	100	25	Y	Same	Neutral
11	35	51-75	51-75	0	Y	Up	Agree
12	150	100	100	100	Y	Up	Agree
13	70-80	0	26-50	25	N	Up	Agree
14	180	100	0	100	Y	Up	Agree
15	55	0	0	0	Y	Down	Agree
16	30	0	0	0	Y	Up	Agree
17	30	0	0	0	Y	Down	Agree
18	36	0	0	0	Y	Down	Neutral
19	155	100	0	100	Y	Up	Agree
20	80	100	100	100	Y	Up	Neutral
21	50	0	100	51-75	Y	Same	Agree
22	260	100	100	100	Y	Up	Strongly Agr
23	100	100	26-50	100	Y	Down	Disagree
24	387	100	100	100	Y	Up	Agree
25	175	100	0	0	Y	Same	Agree
26	85	100	100	100	Y	Blank	Agree
27	25-125	0	0	0	Y/N	Up	Neutral
28	100	100	100	100	Y	Up	Agree
29	123	100	0	76-99	Y	Up	Agree
30	90-110	0	76-99	0	Y	Up	Agree
31	600-800	100	0	0	Y	Up	Strongly Agr
32	150	0	0	0	Y	Same	Agree
33	320	25	0	0	Y	Up	Strongly Agr
34	Blank	0	0	25	Y	Down	Disagree
35	100	100	100	100	N	Same	Agree
36	105	0	100	100	Y	Up	Neutral
37	200	76-99	100	100	Y	Down	Neutral
38	300	100	100	76-99	Y	Same	Neutral
Comparing Attendance size, percentage of Salary, Housing & Ministry paid,							
health of church, recent growth and Fiscal autonomy							

Questions 11-18: Analysis of Cognitive Data / Open Ended Questions

The following analysis evaluates data retrieved from open-ended questions. Not every answer is given as verbatim responses, but those that are will be noted.³ When several respondents mention the same factors, these factors become relevant for study.

Question Eleven

11. What are some of the most significant challenges you face in your church?

Due the responses received from this question, it ended up being one of the key questions on the survey. Many different answers were provided, and each one was important to the respondent as they were telling of their own significant challenges. At the same time, two basic issues stood out. These are: leadership in the church, and the transient nature of the church which leads to high turnover. These issues were mentioned in some fashion by 16 different respondents, 11 of whom listed both challenges. Before elucidating on these two issues, other significant issues are worth mentioning, some being unique to international church ministry and some being common to most churches.

Concern for security “in light of terrorist attacks”⁴ is an issue many international churches now face. Some international churches use security guards to screen each person who enters. Most international churches have not gone this far, possibly

³ Reminder that all surveys were conducted in confidentiality. Names of respondents are changed to random numbers assigned by SurveyMonkey to provide some traceability for the researcher. All names and number codes are withheld from the public per mutual agreement.

⁴ James Carlson, “International Churches Survey,” SurveyMonkey, Inc. San Mateo, CA. www.surveymonkey.com, 2014, respondent 2.

because of finances, but many have had serious conversations with selected church members about possible terrorist attacks. Since an international church is generally multicultural, with over half of their attendees from outside of their passport countries, they want to remain openly friendly to visitors from everywhere, making them a “soft” target for terrorists. One respondent noted they are dealing with an “increasing hostility to immigration in the country”⁵ which is an issue related to security.

On a somewhat related issue, one respondent stated they are having to deal with “the loss of the US soldiers.”⁶ They did not clarify, but evidently this the result of changes in policy dealing with occupancy of foreign American military bases and the secondary effect that it has on international churches, though this was only listed by one respondent.

Another issue that appears to be unique to international churches is how the church, specifically it’s pastor and leadership, must deal with the expectations of people coming from religious backgrounds different from their own. One respondent stated they have “occasional disagreements based on different theological viewpoints (Charismatic, Reformed, Evangelical) – emphasis on ‘healing ministry’ for example, emphasis on role of the demonic in people’s lives, sanctification defined and viewed differently.”⁷ Other respondents stated they were confronted with “language and

⁵ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 18.

⁶ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 34.

⁷ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

culture challenges,”⁸ or with “integrating different cultures and preferences.”⁹

One challenge that may surprise some is the amount of loneliness people in International Churches experience and its related counseling issues. While it may be true that many international churches are located in what are considered to be exotic places - Paris, Stockholm, Prague, Nice, etc. - the reality of leaving friends, family and acquaintances often affect the expat. This is commonly referred to as “culture shock.” One respondent mentioned that the loneliness in the church also led to depression that had to be dealt with.

A part of one respondent’s answer was unique and somewhat sad. This respondent said that the lack of “importance of the church as seen by American missionaries is a real challenge.”¹⁰ This issue has been mentioned by other researchers dealing with international churches. In many cases after WWII, the American missionary was told to not use English, and that international churches were like special clubs for expats, like an oasis. Sadly, this idea has taken a long time to go away. As a result, many American missions have not used international churches as one of the means through which God can reach and change a community, helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

Finances are a common challenge for many churches around the world, and International churches are no different. Several respondents stated they dealt with

⁸ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 32.

⁹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 35.

¹⁰ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 8.

having stable finances, which impacted the church's ability to adequately support the pastor and the upkeep of facilities. Because of the answers given to question ten, it is possible to infer that finances are actually a very big issue for international churches. Over half of the survey responses showed they do not provide any salary or housing for their pastors. This makes this a more prominent issue than in other churches.

The two issues that most often appeared on the surveys, leadership and transient members, are unique challenges for international churches. This is not to say that non-international churches will not experience these challenges! They could! However, these challenges are more common to international churches, largely because of their make-up.

Of these two challenges, it may be that the challenge of a continuous high turnover of members plays a direct part in the second issue, that of having a leadership problem. Yet, because one of the characteristics of an international church is that of having transient members, are there things that can be done to help with the issue of leadership in international churches? This will be one of the topics covered in the semi-formal interviews.

This author's own experience witnessed a quarter to a half of the international church congregation change every summer. Because at least half of the members were expats, sent to France for a limited time of usually three years or less, it meant that the church had to speed up the process of finding leaders. However, that has its own dangers.

This survey confirms the results of many of preceding researchers, that of international congregations being transient in nature. Respondent 10 reported that “85% of our congregation will be in (city name withheld) three years or less with a growing number leaving after one year.”¹¹ Another respondent stated that “the majority of internationals in the city are students that stay for six years. They typically enter the church as non-Christians or immature Christians, and by the time they have trusted Christ and begun to mature enough to lead, it is time for them to go.”¹² Other respondents used phrases like a “lack of stability or consistency, continual reorientation, dynamic turnover, coming and going, restarting the church” all of which show the depth of this problem of high annual turnover.

The lack of qualified leaders is related to high turnover because developing leaders takes time, and time is not something that most international church members have in abundance. Respondents used the following vocabulary to describe their particular challenge with finding leaders for their churches: “lack, development, qualified, stagnant, rotating, capable, mature, training.”

Along with the lack of leadership and transient members is the fact that many members do not want to be too tied down to a local church. It is common to have people who are gone at least one weekend a month for tourism because they are living in an exotic country. Becoming church leaders means they would have to be consistent in attendance, or that would be hoped for in any case.

¹¹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 10.

¹² Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 23.

Question Twelve

12. The Bible places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of helping the widows, the orphans, the poor, the foreigners... How has your church been involved with accomplishing these teachings?

The Bible has much to say about our treatment of widows, orphans, the poor and the foreigners living among us. We are admonished to take care of these groups of people, to make sure they can survive. In today's society, single mothers are a group that could be considered like biblical widows, and today's refugees like biblical orphans. One of the purposes of this question was to see how many churches are involved in ministering to these people in their locality. The wider idea is that churches who reach out to these individuals are a "launching pad," instead of existing as an "oasis" or a "club" for expats.

As with all open-ended questions, one runs the risk of receiving responses that do not totally answer the question. Of the responses that were explicit, approximately 66 percent of the international churches are regularly involved in some type of local help for those in need in their neighborhoods. Some of the remaining 33 percent are also involved, though it was unclear as to the extent of their involvement. Some of them said they needed help in this area of ministry. Others mentioned that they are located in affluent areas with few needy people around, and that the government helps those that are there. Others stated that they give money to local associations that take care of these people groups, but their church is not directly involved. There were a few

who simply admitted they are not involved in helping those who are found in economic need.

Overall, I found indications of church involvement to be encouraging. One respondent said his church has started an “elderly home where deacons and church members regularly visit.”¹³ Many of the churches mentioned programs that focus on refugees, asylum-seekers, and the homeless. Three respondents stated their church opens their doors during the winter months to provide a place of warmth during the day. Several respondents said they use their kitchens to provide meals, one of whom serves “70-90 people five days a week,”¹⁴ and one mentioned they specifically target students with a meal ministry. One church said it “has begun an Anti-Human Trafficking ministry that is working towards opening a safe house,”¹⁵ while another stated they provide funding for the ministry of the International Justice Mission’s office in the Philippines.¹⁶ In fact, nine different respondents declared they were involved in ministry outside of their local areas, specifically mentioning eight different countries of involvement – Albania, Iran, Syria, Romania, India, Palestine, Philippines, and Moldova.

¹³ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 1.

¹⁴ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 13.

¹⁵ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 32.

¹⁶ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 13.

Question Thirteen

13. How many of these ways is the English language used in your church?

- It is the only language used.***
- We use mostly English, but will periodically use another language in worship.***
- Our sermons are translated into the local language.***
- Our entire services are translated into the local language.***
- Our service is in the local language and we translate into English.***
- We offer English language classes as a church outreach.***
- Other (please specify).***

This question is a mix of requesting demographic information with an open-ended question at the end. The information received from this question helps to verify the place of the English language in individual churches. One of the characteristics of an international church is that most of the service is either in English, or it is translated into English as the world's lingua franca. The way that the question was asked means that a church could have several responses, in fact 58 different responses were received for this question.

Of the 38 responses, 23 replied they most often use English during worship services but will periodically use another language as well. The next largest grouping involved 14 (36.84%) of the respondents who only use English during their services. This means that 63 percent of these international churches use more than English.

Twelve churches use some sort of translation during their services. Sometimes, this was into English, but usually, it was into the local language and possibly several

others. Most of the translation was accomplished so that people could listen through special headsets. English, and whatever the local language was, were the only two languages that were translated from the stage. This means that 1/3 of these international churches provided translation into more than the local language and English.

Of specific interest was the question asking how many churches provided English language classes as a sort of church outreach. Seven responded that this was indeed the case. Given English is the global language, this seemed to be a golden opportunity for outreach by international churches. Yet, the total responses would indicate this is not the practice.

Question Fourteen

14. Please briefly describe your involvement with like-minded pastors (of international churches) for fellowship, mutual learning, and encouragement. Please name the group in which you are involved.

This question was designed to help determine how widespread the support groups are for international pastors. Just as people in international churches can experience loneliness, stress, and anxiety from being in a new culture, or from terrorist attacks or depression, so too can the pastor of an international church. Some international churches are located in areas where there are other international churches, but most of them are relatively isolated.

All the respondents, except for two, indicated they had some involvement with some other group. Ten responses (25%) said they were involved with a local network of pastors, but not an international group. While they did not say it, it may be assumed these pastors could communicate in the local language.

Because of the researcher's involvement in ICC-Eurasia¹⁷ and AICEME,¹⁸ it is not surprising these two groups were mentioned more than any other. AICEME was mentioned by 14 different respondents. ICC-Eurasia was listed by nine respondents. Only one church listed both AICEME and ICC-Eurasia. Other groups listed include Christian Associates,¹⁹ IBC,²⁰ Acts 29,²¹ and the Evangelical Covenant Church.²²

It is evident there is a need for pastors to be involved in a good support group. There are options available, but as one respondent noted, "distance is often a challenge,"²³ which makes involvement by some pastors more difficult than others. This also highlights the problem of communication between international churches because some churches have very little knowledge of any of the groups working with international churches.

¹⁷ For more information, please visit <http://icceurasia.com/>.

¹⁸ For more information, please visit <http://aiceme.net/>.

¹⁹ Now referred to as "Communitas International" see <http://gocommunitas.org/about/>.

²⁰ For more information, please visit *The International Baptist Convention*, <http://ibc-churches.org/>.

²¹ For more information, please visit <http://www.acts29.com/network/europe/>.

²² For more information, please visit <http://www.covchurch.org/>.

²³ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

Question Fifteen

15. Please describe the accountability that you have with a supervisor or coach (this does not mean your local church board).

In many ways, this question is a continuation of the direction of the previous question. Does the international pastor have a person who can be their coach or supervisor, who is not a person with the power to hire and fire the pastor, someone with whom the pastor can be truly transparent?

The responses to this question were scary. Over half of the respondents, 26, said they did not have any consistent accountability person in their life that was not part of the church leadership, and many of them (8 respondents, or 20%) admitted there was no accountability in their ministry at all. One respondent wrote he dealt with this through “considerable internal motivation, and the knowledge that it is done for and before God.”²⁴

Many respondents (8) said they were accountable to a mission organization for monthly check-ins. This is not surprising because many of the pastors are also missionaries who raise their support to cover their salaries.

These responses point out the importance that groups, such as ICC-Eurasia and AICEME, can have in areas that may include coaching, general encouragement, or pastoring the international pastors.

²⁴ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

Question Sixteen

16. We often hear that if one wishes to fit in with their host culture, they must learn the local language. Do you believe this to be true and how are you doing learning the local language?

The overwhelming response to this question agreed with the statement in the first part of the question. About 90 percent of the respondents made statements such as “totally convinced,”²⁵ “tremendously helpful,”²⁶ “optimal,”²⁷ and “most definitely.”²⁸

At the same time, 22 of the respondents gave reasons as to why they had not done better in learning the local language. A common view was that it is not necessary to learn the local language to minister in an international church, but it is considered important if one wishes to have an impact in their local neighborhood and culture. The excuse often cited was the lack of time available for adequate language learning. Some international pastors became too busy doing their ministry so that they did not have adequate time for language learning.

Of the four respondents who disagreed with the importance of learning the local language, three were from the UK. Since I was not able to ask clarifying questions afterwards, I cannot give reasons for their answers. In retrospect, this question is probably not pertinent to international churches in English-speaking countries since they don’t have a local language to learn.

²⁵ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 8.

²⁶ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 6.

²⁷ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 37.

²⁸ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 27.

Respondent 25 gave a great apologetic as to the importance of learning the local language. He stated, "If we want to be relevant in the culture we are placed in, language is top of the list for how to do that."²⁹ He went on to say that he knew two reasons to learn the local language:

1. Local leaders and people of influence speak the local language. Those people will not take you seriously until you learn their language. They will always categorize you (at least subconsciously) as at least irrelevant and merely quaint, and perhaps even cultic (in a western European context).
2. At Pentecost, people heard the message in their heart language. This is significant that the first international worship service in the church age was in their heart language. At the very least, we can attempt to speak and learn their heart language if we want to reach their hearts with the Gospel.³⁰

On the other side of the argument, respondent 24 stated an international pastor must rather ask the question, "What culture are you ministering to?"³¹ He continued by stating, "International churches are not ministering primarily to the 'host culture,' but primarily to the 3rd Culture of expats, international students, and locals with 'international aspirations.'"³² The respondent closed his argument by saying if this is the case, then "knowing the expat language and the expat culture becomes relatively more important, in my opinion."³³

Underneath both of these positions is the theological and missiological positioning of where the church wishes to place itself. If a church wishes to be an "oasis," the pastor is less likely to take time to learn the local language. If a church

²⁹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 25.

³⁰ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 25.

³¹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

³² Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

³³ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 24.

wishes to be a “launching pad” into the surrounding neighborhood and city, the pastor is more likely to spend time learning the local language.

Question Seventeen

17. Being involved in an international church also involves your spouse and your children. What have you found to be the biggest challenges for your spouse and your children because of you being the pastor of an international church?

An old saying says, “If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy!” Often, the spouse and children of a pastor are called upon to sacrifice for the sake of the church. When one changes from ministering in a normal church to an international church, the challenges that ministry families may face are very important to consider. One of the respondents wrote that his challenges in an international church were mostly the “same as in the local church elsewhere but intensified due to cultural and linguistic challenges.”³⁴ At the same time he also felt that their situation was enriched by the variety of cultural interchanges they had with so many people.

Being that everyone is different and that we all have different needs, it is not surprising that there were many answers to this question. Still, one general topic topped the list as it was noted by 1/3 of our total respondents, making this the most common challenge for our spouses and our children. This subject was the challenge of how our spouses and children deal with friends, or rather the absence of friends.

³⁴ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 34.

Several respondents indicated the challenge was in not having their old friends around anymore and the distance between them. Others stated it was the lack of having people around who could become friends, or not having other children in the church the age of the pastor's children, which also meant not having a Sunday School for their children, or a youth group. These challenges are not extraordinary in that any family that does a major move will experience some of these issues. Being as so many respondents stated this, one can conclude that it is important to prepare pastoral families for this potential challenge in international ministry. Further, this data confirms to this researcher the importance of regular retreats or conferences organized by ICC Eurasia for pastors and their families. Other groups might want to consider the benefit of this type of gathering for their families.

Schooling for the children was the second most common challenge for spouses and children. Five respondents said they had problems with their children's education. One stated their children had to learn a local language, and another just said it was difficult. As one who has had his own children in foreign schools, I can affirm that this can be a major stress. My wife and I enrolled our children in a variety of different schools; private Christian school, Catholic school, public school, boarding school, international school, and home school. One type does not fit every child, and their needs change as they age and mature. The challenge is that if one wants to have a successful ministry, they must also have a successful educational experience for their children.

Four respondents wrote that finances were a challenge for their families. One respondent said that he was in an affluent situation where their parishioners experienced minimal financial discomfort, but his family had limited resources and could not take the vacations others experienced. Two others stated they had “financial constraints,”³⁵ and they were challenged because of a “lack of financial stability.”³⁶

Thankfully, these challenges don’t always exist, and some respondents spoke of the joys and benefits of their international situation. Eight respondents said their families enjoyed their situation and were not having any specific challenges. The words used to describe their families included “thriving, adjusted very well, been great, greatly enriched, like it.” Why do some families have challenges and others do not? This is a question worthy of more study, but undoubtedly individual personalities, local culture, and family support systems are among the factors that play a role.

Question Eighteen

18. There are some people (pastors included) who believe that international churches should not exist, but that we should encourage all believers to attend local churches. If someone came to you as the pastor of an international church and asked you why your church existed, what would you give as a very short answer?

One reason this question was on the survey was because this is what I heard from some local pastors and believers when we were in the process of beginning the

³⁵ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 36.

³⁶ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 23.

International Christian Community of Lyon. I had what I considered to be valid, biblical reasons for the existence of international churches (see chapter two), but I wanted to see if others could give me additional reasons.

In fact, all 40 respondents stated they believed international churches had a valid place in today's ecclesiastical world. Two of the 40 respondents did qualify their response by noting that there might come a time when a specific international church should maybe no longer exist because of changing local population demographics and thus should have a potential exit strategy.

The most common reason given for the existence of international churches is language. Many respondents stated the local language is not spoken very well by their members, many of whom are present for a short amount of time and lack resources and/or motivation to study the local language. One respondent said, "There will always be people who do not speak the local language, particularly sufficient enough to be fed spiritually."³⁷ Another one stated their argument this way, "People should go to a church where they can grow in the Lord. If they do not speak the language they cannot grow in the Lord."³⁸

Other opinions given were:

³⁷ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 34.

³⁸ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 35.

- “International churches complement local churches in reaching out to the local community, amongst others by showing the beautiful diversity of God’s global church body.”³⁹
- “International churches give us a deeper, broader understanding of the physical world, and the many issues ranging from immigrant and anti-trafficking issues, to issues of family and marriage dynamics and also help us better understand and live out grace to those who are different from us.”⁴⁰
- We are there “to engage the spiritual needs of English speakers in the city, utilizing English language as a means of outreach, relationship building and discipleship, so that we may be able to deploy hundreds of reproducing disciple making Christians into the world which is increasingly embracing English as a lingua franca: no longer a curiosity, but a strategic growth opportunity for the spread of the gospel message.”⁴¹
- “Many of our members would not feel able to connect well to a local church with life-giving relationships.”⁴² “Our members come with unique problems and situations related to being outside their passport country.”⁴³

³⁹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 1.

⁴⁰ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 5.

⁴¹ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 36.

⁴² Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 10.

⁴³ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 12.

- “International churches are meeting grounds for foreigners to meet and relax from feeling so out of place in the rest of their lives. Allows culture groups to enjoy one another.”⁴⁴
- “The international church provides a place of worship for those who are transient in nature, in the host country for 6 months up to 3 years. It provides a place where they can worship in a language and in a culture that is familiar.”⁴⁵

Though respondents didn’t specifically state it, these responses show that given a choice, many internationals would choose to worship with people who are like them, foreigners with other foreigners in a strange country, rather than in a local church where they are singled out as foreigners among the locals. People want to feel that they belong to a group.

These responses confirm that there is a valid place for international churches in today’s ecclesiastical world. If an international church has the goal of being a “launching pad” for the witness of Jesus Christ, the international churches are also fulfilling an integral part of the Great Commission.

Questions Nineteen and Twenty

Neither question 19 nor 20 asked for more information about the international church. Question 19 asked if the respondent was willing to have a Skype conversation with the researcher in a semi-formal interview to ask further questions. Question 20

⁴⁴ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 40.

⁴⁵ Carlson, International Churches Survey, respondent 31.

asked how many of the respondents would like to receive a copy of this completed dissertation when it is finished.

Semi-Formal Interviews

Over eighty percent of the respondents (32) from the International Church Survey said that they would be happy to participate in a semi-formal interview with the researcher to further discuss this subject. It was determined that 10 participants in the semi-formal interviews were necessary to validate any findings. The researcher put together a list of 15 possible participants and emailed each one to ask if they could set aside 15 to 30 minutes for a Skype conversation. Less than 10 responded, but those who did answered that they would be willing participants. The researcher went through the remaining survey respondents and proceeded to contact more possible participants, eventually ending with 11 willing participants.

The next step in the semi-formal interview process was to send each participant the list of interview questions. These questions were formulated from the responses received from the International Church survey, specifically to try to further clarify how churches handle the tension between being an oasis and a launching pad, and what churches do to help develop church leaders. The six questions are:

1. What is your church's mission statement? (This could be a vision statement or a saying of sorts...) - do you consider your church more of an oasis or a launching pad?

2. Can you share the plan you have used / are using to help develop your church leaders?
3. What would you tell someone who is just beginning their international church ministry?
4. What has surprised you about international church ministry?
5. What do you feel you are lacking in your ministry? (What could take your ministry to a higher level?)
6. Is there anything you would like to add?

It took about three weeks to conduct the interviews. They lasted between nine and twenty-five minutes. Each interview was recorded on the researcher's iPhone, and then transcribed into print. After collating all the responses, the researcher ended up with a sixteen page, single-spaced, typed document.⁴⁶ It is changed slightly to protect the anonymity of the interviewees. The given responses are sometimes edited for clarity, without changing the meaning of the respondents' thoughts. Each individual response is categorized by number so that one can compare responses from the same individual throughout this analysis. The analysis of the semi-formal interviews follows below.

⁴⁶ The sixteen-page document of the semi-formal interviews is in the possession of the researcher and will not be available for publication due to confidentiality reasons.

Question One

1) What is your church's mission statement? (This could be a vision statement or a saying of sorts...)

- do you consider your church more of an oasis or a launching pad?

It was informative to hear the varying mission/vision statements because this statement is often the main guiding principle that an organization has for its activities and goals. Not every church had a written statement, but for those who did, their specific statements are listed below:

- 1] "Our mission is to reflect a love of God in a secularized environment, offering the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people, regardless of background, nationality, or economic status, and to make disciples and send believers with the Good News to the ends of the earth."
- 2] "Growing together and reaching out in Christ."
- 3] "A Bible Church in the heart of ____ to glorify God, to strengthen Christians, to reach anyone and everyone with the Gospel of Christ."
- 5] "We want to share the good news about Jesus with as many people as possible. Our vision is to advance the kingdom by equipping disciples and building multi-cultural communities that bring spiritual, social and cultural renewal to those around us."
- 6] "We exist to deploy disciple-makers into the whole world to the glory of God."
- 8] "Keeping the main thing, the main thing!"

- 10] “Like the early apostles, we witness to God’s presence, grace and love for all people in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.”
- 11] “To disciple and equip believers for works of service to the glory of Jesus.”⁴⁷

After discussing the mission/vision statement, participants were asked if their church was more of an “oasis” or a “launching pad.” This is a continuum on which every church functions, whether intentionally or accidentally, and there is always a tension between the two ends of the spectrum. The more one emphasizes one position, the other automatically drops in proportion. The bottom line is that every church in the world is a mix of these two positions. More can be read about this in the literature mentioned in chapter three of this thesis-project, specifically in David Pederson’s *Expatriate Ministry: Inside the Church of the Outsiders* where Pederson refers to this tension as a “mission tension.”

Because of the transient nature of international church members, it is more probable that the “oasis” style church is more common than the “launching pad” style church. The responses were as expected. Four said they were both, five said they were an “oasis,” and two said they were a “launching pad.” Of the five responses for being an “oasis” church, three stated they were moving to becoming more of a “launching pad.”

Interviewee 8 made a statement about this tension that is worth considering. He stated, “I would like to see the church more as a sending off point, but quite often

⁴⁷ James Carlson, “Semi Formal Interview”, November 2017, interviewees listed question 1.

quite a few people come because purely it is an oasis in a foreign society for them. That is usually the initial point..."⁴⁸

Question Two

2) Can you share the plan you have used / are using to help develop your church leaders?

Because the International Church survey showed that having qualified church leaders was one of the greatest challenges for International Churches, it was presumed that some churches would maybe have a well-developed program for leadership development, but that most would not. The results of this question show this presumption to be true.

Most of the respondents admitted to not having any specific training programs. At the same time, the majority shared they were providing leadership development through "on-the-job" training, which might include weekly or monthly meetings during which a biblical passage might be studied, annual leadership retreats, and literature available that talked specifically about church leadership. Most of the respondents shared that they looked for people who showed biblical qualities of a leader, though one respondent shared that this issue is challenging because one of the first things they consider when looking for leaders is, "Are they going to be around for more than six months."⁴⁹ The danger of having length of stay as a prerequisite is that one could end

⁴⁸ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, interviewee 8 question 1.

⁴⁹ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, Interviewee 10 question 2.

up with leaders that one does not really want. This respondent confidentially shared they personally questioned one of their leader's belief in Christianity.

Two respondents had specific programs for their leaders. One had training sessions for new and ongoing leaders three times per year. New leaders were placed as apprentices in one of their home groups with the hope that they would learn and become a leader in a future home group.⁵⁰

The second respondent shared that they have a 2-year leadership track program. Upon completion of this program, participants have a theological foundation to "basically do anything in the church they want."⁵¹

The answers to this question confirm this is an important issue for pastors to consider for the good of their church, and for groups such as the International Christian Community of Eurasia to ponder when planning for pastor's retreats and possible seminar subjects.

Question Three

3) What would you tell someone who is just beginning their international church ministry?

All respondents replied to this question. A common theme that appeared was that the answers were something that the respondents had wished that they had been told when they were starting their ministry. The answers given are listed below:

⁵⁰ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, Interviewee 5 question 2.

⁵¹ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, Interviewee 9 question 2.

- 1] Those who attend an international church are not all Americans. Be patient. Be willing to learn. A changing congregation is the norm.
- 2] Learn the local language. Don't expect theological unity. Avoid cultural stereotyping. Practice radical hospitality so no one feels like a stranger. Have a humble spirit.
- 3] Have lots of perseverance and patience.
- 4] Be flexible. Be yourself. Don't evaluate your ministry based on any other international ministry. Learn your ministry context.
- 5] Spend a year just getting to know your people. Have lots of patience and understanding. Get some cross-cultural training. The pastor needs to stay longer in an international church than an ordinary church.
- 6] Hold your own expectations loosely. Be ready to change. You will constantly be building relationships. Love God supremely, then love your spouse and children well, and then your church. Serve your church gladly. Be ready to assassinate all resentment and bitterness.
- 7] Define what you are trying to do, where you are trying to go, and who you are trying to target.
- 8] Have a thick skin and a soft heart. Your people will come from different ethnic and denominational backgrounds.
- 9] Pray, pray more, pray some more! Have a support team with whom you can share everything to help keep discouragement at bay and allowing you to see the bigger picture.

- 10] Be flexible, an international church doesn't work like any other church. Learn the local language. Actively invite people to become involved with the church ministries.
- 11] Take the time to get to know the stories of those involved in your church, including what they think is the purpose of your church.⁵²

As one reads these responses, several issues come out quite strongly. The international church should not be compared to a normal church because of the transient nature of the congregation, because of the multi-ethnic background of the congregation, and because of the multitude of theological and denominational backgrounds represented in the congregation. All of this makes unity difficult, but vitally important.

Another issue mentioned is that even though the language that will mostly be used in an international church is English, one should take the time to study the local culture and language. In fact, half of the respondents specifically mentioned the importance of this as well as the importance of having cross-cultural preparation training for working in an international church.

Question Four

4) What has surprised you about international church ministry?

This question is like the previous question in that both questions deal with preconceived notions that have been challenged in some manner through the

⁵² James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, interviewees listed question 3.

respondents' own experiences. In this question, I was hoping to learn about how an international church can be unique. Once again, the answers given are below:

- 1] Because of cultural differences, misunderstanding can easily arise.
- 2] Because of cultural diversity this church experience has been very different from previous church experiences.
- 3] We have doubled in size in two years, and that was not expected!
- 4] Relationships within the church family are formed quickly.
- 5] It's so different from the church I grew up in, very multi-cultural. The pastor needs a lot of flexibility. Literature is lacking in this particular field (international church ministry).
- 6] The speed at which things change is very high. People's readiness to embrace personal change is greater than I thought it would be. There is an unexpected British/American animosity that is surprising and appalling. The locals are surprisingly interested in an English-speaking church. Many people in the church feel isolated and lonely.
- 7] The Lord has provided totally unexpected opportunities for us to reach places we never expected.
- 8] My role has changed from being a pastor in a denomination to a pastor for a multitude of people from different denominations, meaning I can't assume that everyone believes like I do or has the same religious traditions.

- 9] Our unity has to be found in our diversity. We must not get caught up in minor issues.
- 10] It has been a happy surprise to find that we can bring many different denominations and backgrounds together in one church and be unified. We focus on loving God and loving our neighbors.
- 11] It has been surprising to find the dynamic of a love/hate relationship between the local churches and the international church, with no clear understanding by the local church as to why the international church exists.⁵³

Obviously, international church ministry has many surprises! The most common theme, however, is surprise at the multicultural differences and diversity found in their churches. This leads me to two thoughts. First, it is possible that some international pastors may not be aware of the multicultural aspect they will encounter in an international church. The second thought, which is probably the greater reason for surprise in this area, is that the reality of living out or applying multiculturalism in the church is harder than most of us anticipate.

⁵³ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, interviewees listed question 4.

Question Five

5) What do you feel you are lacking in your ministry? (What could take your ministry to a higher level?)

Many of the responses given to this question were highly personal. Therefore they have been edited to keep the respondents anonymous and their responses confidential.

- 1] Would be nice to be more gifted linguistically with the local language.
- 2] Would have been helpful to know more about the different cultures I would be ministering to, I knew nothing about polygamy.
- 3] Would like to add a pastor from the local culture to help us with our local outreach.
- 4] Would be great to have other staff members join us to focus on a certain age group in the church, youth or children, and to focus on the music ministry.
- 5] It's amazing how alone and isolated one can feel in this ministry. It would be nice to have close friendships and regular meetings with other international church pastors.
- 6] It would be great to have other staff members.
- 7] It would be good to let people's backgrounds and spiritual lives speak into my ministry plan for the church, which would help develop people's spiritual walk during the time they spend with us.

- 8] It would be nice to have regular ministerial or denominational meetings where friendships are formed and where you feel challenged. Annual international pastor gatherings are not enough.
- 9] It would be good to have a team of good people around me that I can train and empower to do the ministry. As a team, we can have a bigger vision.
- 10] It would be nice to have other pastors to talk with regularly. I really enjoy the annual gatherings of international pastors, but it would be nice to have the means of a regular emotional support structure.
- 11] I would love to see a staff member who is strong on developing a bridge between the local religious culture and our international church.⁵⁴

A common thread reflected in over half of these answers dealt with the respondents feeling alone and isolated in their ministries. The solutions presented were to add staff members to have a team approach locally, and to have more frequent opportunities to gather together with others in international church ministry. Neither of these ideas can be easily put into practice, but they are worth remembering when international church groups are planning their gatherings.

⁵⁴ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, interviewees listed question 5.

Question Six

6) Is there anything you would like to add?

This question was added in case respondents felt the researcher had forgotten to deal with an important issue in international church ministry. Not everyone had something to say, and among the answers given, there is a wide range of subjects. The responses are listed below:

- 1] From scriptures I see that everything must be subject to God, and if we're not unified, then we won't grow.
- 2] International ministry is endlessly interesting and has kept me energized and motivated.
- 3] Build as many bridges to the local churches as possible. About half of our group is made up of locals.
- 5] It is easy for an international church to seem disconnected from the local community and churches, actually being off of the spiritual radar of local church groups.
- 6] International churches have a place in assisting, supporting and encouraging local churches in the pursuit of fulfilling the Great Commission.
- 7] You should plan what is going to happen when you leave.
- 8] Make sure your leadership team is behind you and your family and that they give you plenty of time to settle into your new roles.

- 9] An international church needs to have a mission's plan. International churches are mission sending places.
- 10] I've heard that if you go more than seven years in international ministry that people back home will feel that you are sort of out of touch with the context back home.
- 11] It's important for an international church to remain international and not to become an "American" church that is open to internationals. The elder board of an international church should be like the cultural breakdown of your members.⁵⁵

Not surprisingly, most of these added thoughts contain spiritual, cultural and futurist warnings. By comparing answers from the same interviewee, one does see that themes emerge in each interviewee's responses.

Interviewee 2 mentioned the importance of learning the local language, talked about cultural diversity, mentioned wishing to know something about polygamy, and ended by saying they found all of this endlessly interesting and that this ministry has kept them energized and motivated. Interviewee 3, along with two others, twice mentioned the desire to be involved in the local culture. Several mentioned a desire to have a team to minister alongside, and that international church work can make one feel alone.

⁵⁵ James Carlson, "Semi Formal Interview", November 2017, interviewees listed question 6.

Conclusions

“A Light to All Nations? Assessing the Missional Strength and Commitment of International Churches in Europe.” Yes, International Churches can be a light to all nations! Like churches everywhere around the world, International Churches must realize that there is a continuum of missional purpose upon which their church is located. On one end of this continuum one finds the “oasis” church, and on the other end is the “launching pad” church. The reality is that every church is a mix of these two positions and the findings of this research confirm this statement.

Research results show that more International Churches see themselves as being more of an “oasis” church than a “launching pad” church. Therefore, the first suggestion from the survey data is that International Churches must consciously push themselves to not only be “oasis” style churches, but also “launching pad” churches. International Churches must have an outward view; they must specifically have a mission program that includes both far and near places. International Churches have wonderful opportunities to reach into their local areas. With globalization having increased so much, and the English language being the “lingua franca” of the entire world, data shows that there are numerous opportunities that an international church can provide locally, such as offering English classes. And, like churches anywhere, an International Church can be involved in sending and supporting mission work in foreign countries.

The second suggestion is closely related to the first and suggests that pushing a bit further away from the “oasis” end of this missional continuum will also help the

International Church being involved with their local culture. A possible starting place is to begin sharing its meeting area with other local churches. This suggestion is that the International Church pastor learn the local language. Because most International Churches are in locations where English is a foreign language, there is a necessity for someone to be able to communicate with local authorities and local ministries when needed. Ideally, the research suggests that it would be good if the pastor or someone on their staff has a good working knowledge and skill in the local language. But, as was pointed out, it is advantageous for the church if the pastor can speak the local language, especially in a small church, as they are the primary leader of the church and the local town leaders appreciate dealing with the primary leader. It is true that most pastors of International Churches do not need to speak the local language to fulfill their main ministry responsibilities, as was stated by several in the survey. But this is actually a danger for the pastor who thinks this way. If they are not careful, it can become a temptation to ignore the local language, as was also mentioned in the survey. If the international pastor is wishing to meet consistently with other local pastors and looking for opportunities to reach out and help other churches and believers, then knowing the local language is vital, though complete fluency is not required.

From the data, a third suggestion for an International Church to help avoiding becoming too much of an “oasis” is to have church leaders who come from differing cultures. As suggested, church leadership should reflect the various cultures within the church, especially because Americans tend to take over and run things, even if they are in a minority. The pastor and the church leaders must not let this happen. They should

consciously celebrate and honor all the cultures present.

This may not be easy. As it was stated, a pastor may have a difficult time finding qualified church leaders. The biggest challenge for International Churches, according to the data, is to have qualified and willing church leaders. Most of the respondents noted that it was difficult to have enough people who could become church leaders because of the transient nature of most of their congregation. But it was also noted that proper training for church leaders was also needed. So, the challenge was finding people who were able to meet the physical presence requirements along with the spiritual qualifications needed for church leadership.

The fourth suggestion coming from the survey data deals specifically with the transient nature of those who attend International Churches and what could be done to minimize the difficulties stemming from this. It is suggested that for the good of the church and its members, the pastor should consider staying for a longer period than they might normally consider. This doesn't mean that members will be less transient, but that the challenges from that could be minimized. It was suggested that if a pastor could stay for seven to ten years, or even more, this would help the church become better integrated, as it takes many years for foreigners to really learn a local culture.

There were also some secondary findings from my research that I would like to mention in this conclusion. These are findings that stood out from the research, but upon which I was not focusing.

First, I was surprised at the relatively small amount of published literature on this subject. Several authors who had written on International Churches self-published their

studies, which made finding their work a challenge. Thankfully, I was able to contact them and purchase copies of their work directly, but the lack of accessibility to their work by the general public is a concern. There are now four doctoral dissertations written on different aspects of international church ministry and they are accessible through academic searches.

Second, I discovered there was not a universally accepted definition of an International Church. By starting with the Lausanne Movement's definition, which is most widely recognized, and adding some elements from Wald and others as detailed in chapter three, I feel I have developed the definition of an International Church more fully than the definitions found in other sources. My definition and expanded explanation are:

- An International Church is a church where at least half of the congregation does not live in their passport country.
- An International Church can be found anywhere in the world. It specializes in ministry to people who are not living in their passport country for a variety of reasons. International Churches use the lingua franca of the world as the language of communication, which in today's world is English. They may offer translation into the local language or other languages found in the congregation, but English will always be used. International Churches are often different characteristically from local churches because of their congregations' greater diversity nationally, theologically, denominationally, economically, educationally and linguistically. Because of these characteristics, demographically International Churches tend to have younger and more highly transitional congregations than the other churches around them.

The third of these secondary discoveries is that confusion exists between the notion of an International Church and a Multicultural Church. Some authors appeared to use these two phrases interchangeably. Yet, there is a real difference between the two. The most common definition given of a Multicultural Church is that no more than

80 percent of its congregation belongs to the same cultural or ethnic group. This means that a Multicultural Church only needs to have 20 percent of its congregation coming from a different culture. With this definition, a Multicultural Church should not automatically be considered an International Church since the International Church must start with 50 percent of its congregation living outside of its passport country.

One might say that most International Churches can be considered Multicultural Churches. Yet, it is possible an International Church also does not qualify as Multicultural. Think of a church filled with American expats where less than 20 percent of the entire congregation are not American. While this may be a remote possibility, it is still a real actuality, for example in the case of overseas American military churches.

My fourth secondary discovery dealt with the number of different groups of International Churches that exist. My surprise came from the fact that I had never heard of some of these groups until I began my research, and I continued to discover more as my studies progressed. There are ten different groups of International Churches⁵⁶ mentioned in some fashion in my research, though they do not all have the same level of commitment to International Churches. It does not appear to me that these groups have any regular communication with one another. I would hope this can change in the future, in the spirit of the Lausanne Movement and for the glory of God.

There is a plethora of other advice found in the data given by those who filled out my survey and those who participated in the semi-formal interviews. That advice is given earlier in this chapter and can be and should be studied by all interested.

⁵⁶ A list of these ten groups of International Churches can be found in Appendix G.

“A Light to All Nations?” Yes, International Churches can be part of spreading the spiritual light to all nations. Because of the acceptance of English as the world’s lingua franca, International Churches today have opportunities that did not exist 50 years ago. This means that they can be located anywhere around the world.

The data revealed in this research shares important issues. May we all be humble enough to learn from this data and may our learning continue as the world continues to change. May God bless this movement of churches as they actively participate in the fulfilment of the Great Commission as both “oasis” and “launching pad” churches!

Soli Deo Gloria!

APPENDIX A

The Brussels Statement, developed by the Ninth Conference of Church Executives Responsible for Foreign-Language Congregations of the Churches of Europe in 1973.

Foreign-Language and/or Expatriate Congregations: Their Role and Responsibility (1973)

Article One:

1. The Mission of the Church in any place is to be God's instrument in witnessing to his love for the world, and to help men and women to realize and respond to his love.
2. The many people moving between countries today are increasingly important for the life and mission of the Church. Churches in the "sending" and "receiving" countries have a common responsibility for those who migrate between them.
3. Foreign-language and/or expatriate congregations have a particular function in the fulfillment of this responsibility. They minister to those Christians, who, because of language and other cultural characteristics have difficulties in sharing fully in the life of the indigenous churches. They also have a missionary responsibility to those expatriates who have lost contact with the Church.
4. Since expatriates tend to be isolated, their congregations should as fully as possible seek visible links and common witness and service with the indigenous churches, and encourage their members to participate as much as possible in indigenous churches and church activities. The indigenous churches should take the initiative to encourage foreign-language and/or expatriate congregations to enter into the closest possible fellowship with them.

Article Two:

1. In light of the foregoing considerations, a foreign-language and/or expatriate congregation should not be established or supported:
 - a. To serve the self-interest of a national, racial or social group;
 - b. Without prior consultation with the Council of Churches, or that national churches of the same confessional family, in the country where the establishment of such a congregation is proposed.
 - c. Without prior consultation with the churches of other countries of that language which may be concerned;
 - d. Until full consultation with the churches of the country has shown that they cannot provide for the ministry such a congregation would perform;
 - e. Which is not integrated into an indigenous church, or, if this is not possible, which is not related to a Council of Churches or some similar ecumenical body within the country where the establishment of such a congregation is proposed;
 - f. By a church in its own country without prior consultation with the Council of Churches, or the national churches of the same confessional family, in the countries which may be concerned.
2. The churches adopting this document will encourage existing foreign-language

and/or expatriate congregations to abide by the principles set out above.

Article Three:

1. Churches and church agencies in the “sending” countries should cooperate in the orientation and training of people going abroad in secular occupations and their families for their responsibility as Christians. So far as a Church in a “receiving” country is able to conduct such an orientation and training program, the churches adopting this document will support it in every way possible.
2. Ministers should only be appointed to foreign-language and/or expatriate congregations after a period of orientation in the country to which they are appointed, preferably under the responsibility of the indigenous church.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Statement from the 9th Conference of Church Executives Responsible for Foreign-Language Congregations of the Churches in Europe, held at Brussels, Belgium, October 1-3, 1973. This conference eventually amalgamated into the AICEME.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

(As approved by the Institutional Review Board of
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: International Churches: Their Place in Fulfilling the Great Commission
Principal Investigator: James (Jim) W Carlson, Doctor of Ministry candidate,
Global Christianity and World Evangelization,
Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

PURPOSE

This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to gather information from the pastors or leaders of international churches mainly throughout Europe to help determine the place of these churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. You may ask any questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.

We are inviting you to participate in this research study because you are either a pastor or one of the main leaders in an international church.

Because in today's society any church can call themselves an international church, I have chosen to use the guidelines suggested by the Lausanne Movement, specifically found in an article written by Sadiri Joy Tira that is entitled, "International Church: Some Unique Features or a Case of Simple Semantics"⁵⁸. In this article, Sadiri Joy Tira begins by proposing that we start with the definition given by the "Missional International Church Network" (<http://micn.org>) which starts by stating an international church is "a church that primarily serve[s] people of various nationalities (expatriates) and church backgrounds living outside their passport (home) countries".

Then Sadiri adds to this definition by stating that an international church should also be a church "that intentionally seeks expatriates as reflected in their outreach strategies and programs; one whose congregation reflects a vibrant multi-cultural community; and one who is involved in strategic ministry initiatives that are "international" in reach." To put this into simpler words, an international church should be "glocal" in its ministry outreach, focused both globally and locally. This means that a church that belongs to a denomination like the American "Southern Baptist" or the British "Anglican" can be called an international church provided that they are purposefully focusing on internationals and not their own denomination.

This research project is done with the oversight of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (South Hamilton, MA, USA) and in conjunction with the International Christian

⁵⁸ http://conversation.lausanne.org/fr/conversations/detail/13001#article_page_1.

Community Eurasia (<http://icc-ministries.org>). The principal investigator of this research project, Jim Carlson, is currently involved with both of these entities as he is enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and has been working with the International Christian Community Eurasia since its creation in France where Jim Carlson and his wife have been missionaries for almost 20 years.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, your primary involvement will last for no more than 20 to 30 minutes to fill out the online survey. If you chose, you may indicate on the survey your willingness to participate in a secondary contact which will be done with 15 to 20 pastors or leaders who have filled out the online survey via a Skype conversation which should take 30 minutes.

The following steps will be followed in this study. The first step in this research process is receiving this letter via email. Some of you may receive this letter directly from me, Jim Carlson, and some of you may receive it from one of your acquaintances, like another international church pastor or leader who knows that you fit the qualifications for completing the online survey and is trying to help me out by forwarding the email that contains this letter to you. After receiving this letter and reading it, you will have the option of clicking on a link which will take you to the online survey. Once you have finished filling out the survey, you will need to “submit” the survey so that it can be added to the results. If you have chosen to indicate that you would be willing to be part of a secondary contact, you will be contacted by email to set up a time for a future Skype meeting.

RISKS

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are minimal. Care will be taken to make sure and guard your privacy even though we don't see the actual results of this survey as being detrimental to anyone's ministry or private life. The responses to all surveys will be kept on a secure online site and as such will be as private as that can be. If I determine that I need to report on a specific response, I will change your name and will not indicate the name of your church or its location.

BENEFITS

The potential personal benefits for me that may occur as a result of your participation in this study are not financial but are to fulfill the requirements needed to submit my Doctor of Ministry thesis project for receiving that degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. One of the goals of this research project is to encourage the growth of international churches in Europe and beyond by showing how they can be a positive influence locally on fulfilling the Great Commission today. A side benefit from this research project will be a

directory of international churches which will appear in an appendix of my Doctor of Ministry thesis project.

COMPENSATION

You will not automatically be compensated for participating in this research project, but your name will be entered in a drawing to receive a new iPad upon completion and submission of the survey. If you indicate on the survey that you are willing to have a secondary contact via a Skype meeting, your name will be entered a second time into the drawing. The drawing will be held the end of October 2014 during the annual International Christian Community Eurasian Pastor's and Family Retreat which will be held in Nice, France this year. If your name is chosen, you will be notified by email, if you are not present, to arrange the details of how you will receive your new iPad. The chances of winning this drawing depend entirely upon the number of people who submit a finished survey and indicate their willingness to have secondary personal contact.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. To ensure confidentiality in my finished research project I will change the names and locations in reporting the specifics of those details. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified. The completed and submitted questionnaires will be kept in a secure online location, to which only I will have the password. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. Stopping in the above manner will mean that your survey will not be tabulated into any results and there will actually be no record of your partial participation.

If you do complete the online survey and then click on the "done" button, you will be giving tacit consent to your participation in this survey. This tacit consent will take the place of your actual signature of consent on this form.

QUESTIONS

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Jim Carlson at Jim.Carlson@efca.org. If you wish to telephone Jim, he can be reached on his French cell phone at: +33 672452409. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Co-Chair of the Institutional Review Board, David A. Currie, at: dcurrie@gordonconwell.edu; 978-646-4176.

ONLINE SURVEY

To proceed to the online survey, click on the link just below this paragraph. Remember that you may look at the survey and then decide to not participate any further and you can simply close the link. But, if you do close the link without “submitting” your answers to the survey, you will not be entered into the drawing for an iPad. If you do finish the survey and then submit your responses by clicking on the “done” button, you will be entered into the drawing and by submitting you will also be giving your tacit consent to have your answers included in my Doctor of Ministry thesis project.

[<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/internationalchurches2014>]

THANKS

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and a special thanks to those who take the time and make the effort to help me with this research project by filling out the online survey. May God bless your ministry and may this research project be used to help fulfill the Great Commission.

James (Jim) W. Carlson
Evangelical Free Church of America, ReachGlobal, Europe Area Leader

40 allée Françoise Dolto
69140 Rillieux la Pape
France

Telephone: +33 672452409

Email: Jim.Carlson@efca.org

APPENDIX C

PDF COPY OF INTERNATIONAL CHURCH SURVEY DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
“SURVEYMONKEY”

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/internationalchurches2014>

International Churches Survey

*** 1. Please fill in your contact information in the following sections. (This information will not be used with your answers of the following questions, but it is important if your name is picked as the winner of the iPad.)**

Name
Address
Address 2
City/Town
State/Province
ZIP/Postal Code
Country
Email Address
Phone Number

*** 2. Please add the following contact information for your church. (This information will appear in the appendix of my thesis as a directory of international churches.)**

Name
Web page
Address
Address 2
City/Town
State/Province
ZIP/Postal Code
Country
Email Address
Phone Number

International Churches Survey

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your international church?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority of people in attendance are outside their passport country.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One culture does not dominate your worship style.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of "English" as your church's main language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being involved in the religious life (contact with other churches) of your community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being involved in the cultural life of your community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making people aware of prayer requests from everyone's home country.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrating cultural events from every culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How important are the following reasons for people attending your church.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The international flavor of having many cultures present.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The feeling of being part of your particular church family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The style of worship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of English as your main language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The preaching quality of the pastor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The importance of worshipping with others from their home culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is no other option for people who don't speak the local language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

International Churches Survey

5. How many different nations are represented in your church? Can you please list them?

When one is talking about the characteristics of a healthy church, there are many places where one can go to get a definition of what makes up a healthy church compared to a nonhealthy church. One web site that provides a very good description of a healthy church is found at <http://go.efca.org/resources/document/ten-leading-indicators-healthy-church>. This web site lists ten leading indicators of what should be found in a healthy church. These indicators include: the centrality of God's Word, passionate spirituality, fruitful evangelism, Spirit-filled worship, Great Commission driven, leadership multiplication, church planting, stewardship of resources, intentional discipling, and loving relationships. These indicators are given with American churches in mind, but I would also propose that they are also valid for international churches in Europe and elsewhere.

6. According to your opinion please rate how you see the following items in being a mark of a healthy church?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Financial autonomy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stable leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a structured church leadership with elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees, children's director, etc...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership that represents your congregation's cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A church that is growing in numbers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of believers' baptisms (public confession of faith for pedobaptists).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of child dedications (enfant baptisms).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of conversions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing the sacraments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a large percentage of your people involved in weekly Bible studies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outreach activities into your local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church members who are well adapted to their new culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement of church leadership with the local ministerial meetings (pastors' fellowship).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 1

International Churches Survey

Solid, Biblical exegetical preaching.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Solid, Biblical thematic preaching.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

7. Would you classify your church as a healthy church?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why?

8. What has happened with your church attendance during the following time periods?

	Church didn't exist	Drop of 11% or more in attendance	Drop of 6% to 10% in attendance	Drop of 1% to 5% in attendance	Attendance has stayed the same	Increase of 1% to 5% in attendance	Increase of 6% to 10% in attendance	Increase of 11% or more in attendance
Today compared to ten years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Today compared to five years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Today compared to three years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Today compared to last year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What is your church's current attendance and membership?

Average attendance?

Church membership?

If you don't keep track of membership, is there a reason?

10. Please pick the response that is closest to your reality concerning church finances.

	0%	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	76 to 99%	100%
The church pays my salary at ____ %.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The church pays my housing at ____ %.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The church pays my ministry expenses at ____ %.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

International Churches Survey

11. What are some of the most significant challenges you face in your church?

12. The Bible places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of helping the widows, the orphans, the poor, the foreigners... How has your church been involved with accomplishing these teachings?

13. How many of these ways is the English language used in your church?

- ☐ It is the only language used.
- ☐ We use mostly English, but will periodically use another language in worship.
- ☐ Our sermons are translated into the local language.
- ☐ Our entire services are translated into the local language.
- ☐ Our service is in the local language and we translate into English.
- ☐ We offer English language classes as a church outreach.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Being a pastor in any church has its difficulties and struggles. Being a pastor / leader of an international church brings added challenges of how to deal with your own spiritual and intellectual development / health. Please answer the following four (4) questions (questions 14 to 17) based upon this thought.

14. Please briefly describe your involvement with like-minded pastors (of international churches) for fellowship, mutual learning, and encouragement. Please name the group in which you are involved.

15. Please describe the accountability that you have with a supervisor or coach (this does not mean your local church board).

Page 5

International Churches Survey

16. We often hear that if one wishes to fit in with their host culture, they must learn the local language. Do you believe this to be true and how are you doing learning the local language?

17. Being involved in an international church also involves your spouse and your children. What have you found to be the biggest challenges for your spouse and your children because of you being the pastor of an international church?

18. There are some people (pastors included) who believe that international churches should not exist, but that we should encourage all believers to attend local churches. If someone came to you as the pastor of an international church and asked you why your church existed, what would you give as a very short answer?

19. Thank you for taking the time to answer all of these questions! If you are willing to have a 30 minute Skype conversation with me to share some stories of your ministry, both good and bad (specifically related to questions 11 & 12), would you please indicate so below?

☐ No thanks!

☐ Yes, I'm willing to help you some more!

My Skype address is:

20. Would you like to receive a completed copy of this research project (in pdf format) when it is finished?

☐ Yes please.

☐ No thanks.

By clicking on the "Done" button just below, you are giving your tacit consent to have your information used in a thesis project, though your identity will be protected. By clicking "Done" you will also be included in the drawing which will take place at the end of October 2014 for a free iPad. If you agree to having a 30 minute Skype conversation, your information will be added to the drawing again so that you will have two chances of winning the iPad. Thank you again for your time and your help! May God bless you, your family and your ministry! Jim Carlson (DMin student, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

APPENDIX D

LIST AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL CHURCHES RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY

•Austria

- English-Speaking United Methodist Church of **Vienna**, Sechshauser Strasse 56, Wien 1150 Austria

www.esumc.at office@esumc.at

Tel. +431 895 81 75

•Belgium

- Antwerp Christian Fellowship, Lange Lozanastraat 36, **Antwerpen**, Belgium, 2018

www.antwerpchristianfellowship.org DLHamburger@gmail.com

Tel. +32 471 06 56 24

- Antwerp International Protestant Church, Veltwijcklaan 297, **Ekeren, Antwerpen**, Belgium 2180

www.aipchurch.org aipchurch@telenet.be

Tel. +32 36 44 20 46

- The International Protestant Church of **Brussels**, Ave des Heros 40, **Auderghem**, 1160, Belgium

www.ipcbrussels.org office@ipcbrussels.org

Tel. +32 2.673.05.81

•Bosnia

- International House Fellowship, Mrakusa 1, **Sarajevo**, Bosnia 71000

No web page Larry.Couch@efca.org

Tel. +387 (62) 453-978

•Czech Republic

- International Church of Prague, Peroutkova 57, Praha 5, **Prague**, Czech Republic 110 00

www.icprague.cz office@icprague.cz

Tel. 420 777 545 411

•Denmark

- The International Church of **Copenhagen**, Gjørllingsvej 10, **Hellerup**, Denmark 2900

www.internationalchurch.dk pastor@internationalchurch.dk

Tel. +45 39624785

•France

- International Christian Community of Provence, 38 rue Vauvenargues, 13100 **Aix-en-Provence**, France

www.iccpaix.org iccpaix@gmail.com

Tel. +33 4 42 21 55 31

- **Bordeaux** Church, c/o 14bis rue Pérès, 33600 **Pessac**, France

www.bordeauxchurch.info bordeauxchurch@gmail.com

Tel. +33 6 74 59 27 76

- International Church of **Grenoble**, 3 bis rue Jean-Richard Bloch, 38400 **Saint Martin d'Hères**, France

www.icgrenoble.org info@icgrenoble.org

Tel. +33 (0)6 31 18 43 57

- International Christian Community of Lyon, Temple du Change, 2 rue de la Loge, 69005 **Lyon**, France

www.icclyon.org icclpastor@gmail.com

Tel. +33 7 83 99 64 72

- International Christian Community of Marseille, 6 rue Friedland, 13006 **Marseille**, France

www.marseillechurch.info iccm@marseillechurch.info

Tel. +33 6 58 90 54 43

- International Chapel of Montpellier, 8 av St Maur, 34000 **Montpellier**, France

www.internationalchapel.eu info@internationalchapel.eu

Tel. +33 (0)4 67 70 57 27

- International Baptist Church of Nice, 13 rue Vernier, 06000 **Nice**, France

www.ibcnice.org ibcnice@gmail.com

Tel. +33 6 64 96 94 22

- The American Church in Paris, 65 quai d'Orsay, 75007 **Paris**, France

www.acparis.org secretary@acparis.org

Tel. +33 (0)1 40 62 05 00

- International Baptist Church Fellowship, Espace St Claire, Centre Commercial, 06570 **Saint Paul de Vence**, France

www.ibcfrance.org

Tel. +33 6 31 68 50 41

- **Germany**

- American Protestant Church of Bonn, Kenndeyallee 150, **Bonn** 53175 Germany

- www.apcbonn.de apcoffice@apcbonn.de

- Tel. +49 (228) 374 193

- International Baptist Church Giessen, Rathenaustrasse 5 – 7, 35394 **Giessen**, Germany

- www.ibc-giessen.de info@ibc-giessen.de

- Tel. +49 6441 76566

- Munich International Community Church, Mozartstrasse 12, 80336 **Munich**, Germany

- www.munichurch.de steve@munichurch.de

- Tel. +49 179 696 4295

- Covenant Fellowship Church, (no address at this time), **Stuttgart**, 70567, Germany

- <http://www.cfcstuttgart.org/> pastor@cfcstuttgart.org

- Tel. +49 176 8418 5896

- **Hungary**

- Danube International Church, Etele ut 55, **Budapest**, Hungary 1119

- www.danubechurch.org

- Tel. 36 30 713 2160

- **Israel**

- Church of the Redeemer, PO Box 14076, Muristan Road, **Jerusalem**, via Israel, 91140

- www.elcjl.org [redeemerofjerusalem@gmail.com](mailto:redemerofjerusalem@gmail.com)

- **Italy**

- International Church of Torino, Istituto Avogadro, Via Gioacchino Rossini 18, **Torino**, Italy 10124

- <http://internationalchurchtorino.com/> ict@amadeus.neomailbox.ch

- Tel. +39 3409178920

- **Netherlands** (Holland)

- American Protestant Church of the Hague, Esther DeBoer-van Rijklaan 20, **The Hague**, Netherlands 2597 TJ

- www.apch.nl office@apch.nl

- Tel. +31 (0)70-324-4490

- **Norway**

- American Lutheran Congregation, Fritners Gate 15, **Oslo** 0264, Norway
www.alcoslo.org emilygratia@hotmail.com
Tel. +47 22443584

- **Poland**

- Szczecin International Christian Fellowship, Ul. Niedzialkowskiego 23/21, **Szczecin**, Poland 71-410
www.facebook.com/SzczecinICF Loren.Ozanne@efca.org
Tel. +48 731-017-755

- **Romania**

- Ecclesia International, Str. Ciurchi 58A, **Iasi**, Romania 700313
<http://www.ecclesiainternational.org/> ecclesiainternational@gmail.com
Tel. +40 747264234

- **Slovakia**

- Bratislava International Church, Panenská 26/28, **Bratislava**, Slovakia 81106
www.bratislavainternationalchurch.org pastor@bratislavainternationalchurch.org
Tel. 421918828156

- **Sweden**

- Immanuel International Fellowship, Kungstensgatan 17, **Stockholm**, Sweden 11358
www.immanuel.se chris.peterson@immanuelskyrkan.se
Tel.

- New Life Church, Missionsvägen 75, Bromma, **Stockholm**, Sweden 16733
www.newlife.nu john@newlife.nu
Tel. +46704247761

- **Switzerland**

- International Church Luzern, Zähringerstrasse 7, **Luzern**, Switzerland 6003
www.icl.ch pastor@icl.ch
Tel. +41 (0)41 240 29 64

- Westlake Church, rue Juste Olivier 6, **Nyon**, Switzerland 1260
www.westlakechurch.com admin@westlakechurch.com
Tel. +41 22 990 24 52

- International Protestant Church, Zeltweg 20, **Zürich**, Switzerland 8032
www.ipc-zurich.org office@ipc-zurich.org
Tel. +41 (0)44 262 55 25

• **Turkey**

- International Protestant Church of **Ankara** (IPCA), Cigdem Mah. Balgat Semt, Cankaya, Turkey 00000 (call for directions)
<http://www.ipcaturkey.org/> pastor@ipcaturkey.org
Tel. +90.312.284.3578

- St. Paul Union Church, Yeni Kapi Sokak #24, Old City, **Antalya**, Turkey 07100
www.SPCCturkey.com Dennis.K.Massaro@gmail.com
Tel. +90.242.247.6857

- Union Church of Istanbul, 237 Istiklal Caddesi, Beyoglu, Istanbul, Turkey 34420
www.ucistanbul.org office@ucistanbul.org
Tel. +90-212 244 5212

• **United Kingdom**

- Leeds Reformed Baptist Church, 20 Cottage Road, **Leeds**, LS5 3NX, UK
www.leedsrbc.org pastor@leedsrbc.org
Tel. +44 01132758997

- American International Church of London, 79a Tottenham Court Road, **London**, NW3 2YH, UK
www.amchurch.co.uk info@amchurch.co.uk

- International Community Church, 13 London St, **Chertsey, Surrey**, KT16 8AP, UK
www.icc-uk.org churchoffice@icc-uk.org
Tel. +44 01932571820

APPENDIX E

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY EURASIA LIST OF CHURCHES⁵⁹

Bulgaria

Sofia

[International Baptist Church of Sofia](#)

Czech Republic

Prague

[International Church of Prague](#)

Estonia

Tartu

[Tartu International Fellowship](#)

France

Aix en Provence

[International Christian Community of Provence](#)

Bordeaux

[Bordeaux Church](#)

Lyon

[International Christian Community of Lyon](#)

Marseille

[International Christian Community of Marseille](#)

Montpellier

[International Chapel of Montpellier](#)

Nice

[International Baptist Church](#)

Paris

[The Bridge International Church](#)

St. Paul

[International Baptist Church](#)

Georgia

Tbilisi

[Tbilisi International Christian Fellowship](#)

Germany

Landstuhl

[Trinity Reformed Church](#)

⁵⁹ List taken from ICCEurasia web page, <http://icceurasia.com/where/> (accessed August 5, 2017).

Munich

[Munich International Community Church](#)

Greece

Athens

[St. Andrews International Church](#)

Italy

Torino

[International Church of Torino](#)

Switzerland

Nyon

[Westlake Church](#)

United Kingdom

Leeds

[Emmanuel Baptist Church](#)

Northwich

[Emmanuel Church](#)

APPENDIX F

MEMBER CHURCHES OF THE AICEME⁶⁰

(Association of International Churches of Europe and the Middle East)

AUSTRIA

Vienna: [English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna](#)

Vienna: [Vienna Community Church](#)

BELGIUM

Brussels: [International Protestant Church of Brussels](#)

Antwerp: [Antwerp International Protestant Church](#)

DENMARK

Copenhagen: [International Church of Copenhagen](#)

EGYPT

Cairo: [St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo](#)

FINLAND

Helsinki: [International Evangelical Church in Finland](#)

FRANCE

Paris: [American Church in Paris](#)

Strasbourg: [International Church of Strasbourg](#)

GERMANY

Berlin-Schöneberg: [American Church in Berlin](#)

Bonn: [American Protestant Church in Bonn](#)

Frankfurt am Main: [Trinity Lutheran Church](#)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Jerusalem: [Church of the Redeemer](#)

LITHUANIA

Vilnius: [International Church of Vilnius](#)

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg City: [All Nations Church of Luxembourg](#)

⁶⁰ List taken from AICEME web page. <http://aiceme.net/find-a-church/> (accessed August 4, 2017).

NETHERLANDS

The Hague: [American Protestant Church of The Hague](#)

NORWAY

Oslo: [American Lutheran Congregation in Oslo](#)

POLAND

Warsaw: [Warsaw International Church](#)

RUSSIA

Moscow: [Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy](#)

SLOVAKIA

Bratislava: [Bratislava International Church](#)

SPAIN

Madrid: [Community Church of Madrid](#)

SWEDEN

Stockholm: [Immanuel International Church](#)

SWITZERLAND

Geneva: [Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva](#)

Lucerne: [International Church of Lucerne](#)

Nyon: [Westlake Church](#)

Zurich: [International Protestant Church - Zurich](#)

TURKEY

Antalya: [St. Paul Union Church](#)

Istanbul: [Union Church of Istanbul](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

Surrey: [International Community Church of Surrey](#)

London: [American International Church](#)

APPENDIX G

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH GROUPS

1. International Churches Network, <http://internationalchurches.net/> .
2. Fellowship of European International Churches, <http://feic.org/> .
3. The Network of International Churches,
<http://www.internationalcongregations.net/> .
4. Association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East,
<http://aiceme.net/> .
5. Churches Abroad, <http://www.churchesabroad.com/> .
6. International Baptist Convention, <http://ibc-churches.org> .
7. Communitas International (formerly Christian Associates),
<http://gocommunitas.org/about/> .
8. Acts 29, <http://www.acts29.com/network/europe/> .
9. The Evangelical Covenant Church, <http://www.covchurch.org/> .
10. International Christian Communities Eurasia, <http://www.icceurasia.com> .

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VITA

James William Carlson was born on January 1, 1958 at the Tandala mission station hospital in the northwest corner of the Belgian Congo. James is currently living in Paris, France along with his wife of 31 years, Kathleen. They have two grown children. James and Kathleen have been ministering with the overseas mission of the Evangelical Free Church of America, known as ReachGlobal, for the last 29 years. James was ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America in 1992.

James grew up on the mission field (Congo / Zaire) and went back as a missionary from 1978 to 1979. After marriage, James and Kathleen began their overseas ministry in Congo and then transferred to France in 1995. James and Kathleen spent time in Aix-en-Provence first and then moved up to the Lyon area where they lived for 15 years, ministering as a pastor in a French-speaking church and then a co-founder of the International Christian Community of Lyon. They moved to Paris in August 2014 and James is now ministering as a Europe Area Leader for ReachGlobal.

James has an A.A. degree from Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia. His B.S. teaching degree in the Social Sciences, came from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. James received his Master of Divinity, with a Mission's emphasis, in 1988 from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, in Deerfield, Illinois. James started his Doctor of Ministry degree at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in 2013. He is planning to finish a degree in "Global Christianity and World Evangelization" by December 2018.